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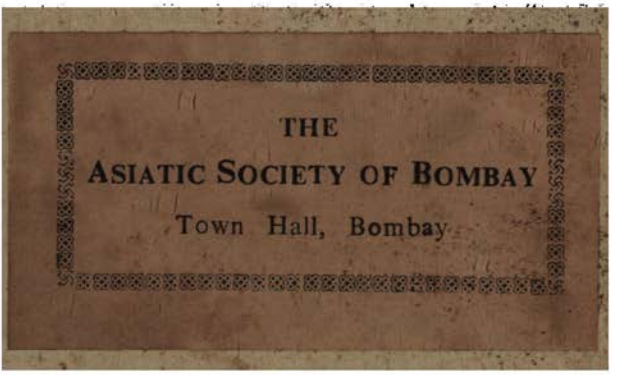

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ORATORY AND ORATORS

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BY

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REVISED AND EDITED BY

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"Criticism in nearly useless, unless the critic quotes innumerable examples."
DAVID HUME.

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PREFACE.

In saying that his object in writing this book has been to aid in awakening a fresh interest in oratory in this country, the author will probably provoke a smile from his readers. "What!" he hears some one exclaim, "have we not an excess of public speakers already? Does not Carlyle declare that 'silence is the eternal duty of man,' and that 'England and America are going to nothing but wind and tongue?'" In reply, we would say that we have no wish to let loose a fresh troop of shallow declaimers upon the country; on the contrary, we feel intensely the social misery which a single declaimer, with a powerful memory, leathern lungs, and a fluent tongue, may inflict on the public. The Roman poet, Horace, speaks of one Novius, an office-holder at Rome,—a tribune,—who was elevated to the station he held, chiefly by the force of his lungs. "Has he not a voice," demanded his supporters, "loud enough to drown the noise of two hundred waggons and three funerals meeting in the forum? It is this that pleases us, and we have therefore made him tribune." We fear that more than one office-holder owes his seat to a similar qualification. But shall we, therefore, conclude that the study of oratory as an art should be discouraged? The very reverse, we think, is the just conclusion.

It is an unpleasant conviction, which we wish the facts did

not force upon us, that while there is plenty of "spouting,"—of speaking, if one pleases,—there is little oratory, and less eloquence. It is for the very reason that the people are deluged by their public speakers with words,—it is because so many of those who assume to address them from the platform remind us so unpleasantly of that bird of the parrot tribe whose tongue is longer than its whole body,—that we would call attention to, and most earnestly emphasise, the value of oratorical studies. It is because our young men do not realise that oratory is the weapon of an athlete, and can never be wielded effectually by an intellectual and moral weakling,—because our colleges unintentionally give currency to this idea by devoting so insignificant a portion of time to exercises in elocution,—that so many persons are ready to afflict the public with "mouthfuls of spoken wind." It is because they consciously or unconsciously hold the pestilent notion that the finest productions of the mind are the fruits of sudden inspiration, the chance visitations of a fortunate moment, the flashings of intuition, that they are ready to mount the platform at the slightest provocation and without any serious preparation. Let them once learn and deeply feel that the most infallible sign of genius is a prodigious capacity for hard work, and an intense conviction of its necessity; that no man ever has, or ever can be, a true orator without a long and severe apprenticeship to the art; that it not only demands constant, patient, daily practice in speaking and reading, but a sedulous culture of the memory, the judgment and the fancy,—a ceaseless storing of the cells of the brain with the treasures of literature, history, a

...ce, for its use,—that one might as well expect literally to command the lightnings of the tempest without philosophy, as without philosophy to wield the lightnings of eloquence,—and they will shrink from haranguing their fellow-men, except after a careful training and the most conscientious preparation. So far is it from being true that, if elocution and style were cultivated more, a torrent of empty declamation would be let loose upon the world, that we are confident the very opposite would be the result. Study and high appreciation of an art, by improving the taste, increase fastidiousness; and hence they are calculated to check, rather than to increase, loquacity.

Owing to the vast abundance of the materials, the preparation of this work, whatever its shortcomings, has been no easy task. Several chapters written for it have been excluded, to avoid making the volume too bulky. It was the author's intention to give a list of the works he had consulted; but they are so numerous that he must content himself with a general acknowledgment of his indebtedness to nearly all the writers on oratory,—for there are few good ones, he believes, whom he has neglected to examine. That it will be easy for a logician to point out apparent contradictions in these pages the author is aware; but he believes it will be found that, as was said of another writer, the latchet of whose shoes he is not worthy to unloose, that these seeming contradictions are, in fact, only successive presentations of single sides of a truth, which, by their union, manifest completely to us its existence, and guide us to a perception of its nature. "No good writer," says Dr. Bushnell, "who is

occupied in simply expressing truth, is ever afraid of contradictions or inconsistencies in his language. It is nothing to him that a quirk of logic can bring him into an absurdity. There is no book that contains so many repugnances, or antagonistic forms, as the Bible."

Finally, to all persons interested in the subject here discussed, and who do not believe with the author of "Lacon" that "oratory is the puffing and blustering spoilt child of a semi-barbarous age," but agree with Luther that "he who can speak well is a man," and with Cicero that it is most glorious to excel men in that in which men excel all other animals, this work is inscribed.

W. MATHEWS.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

I HAVE much pleasure in revising and adapting this valuable work for English readers, feeling sure that it cannot help being of great service to all who desire to acquire the art of public speaking, forming as it does a companion to my "Standard Elocutionist and Speaker."

JOHN W. KIRTON.

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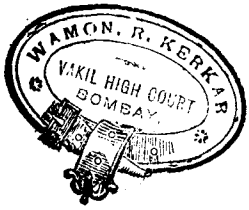

ORATORY AND ORATORS.

CHAPTER I.

THE POWER AND INFLUENCE OF THE ORATOR.

To estimate the degree in which the orator has influenced the world's history, would be a difficult task. It would be hardly too much to say that, since the dawn of civilisation, the triumphs of the tongue have rivalled, if not surpassed, those of the sword. There is hardly any man, illiterate or educated, so destitute of sensibility that he is not charmed by the music of eloquent speech, even though it affect his senses rather than his mind and heart, and rouse his blood only as it is roused by the drums and trumpets of military bands. But when eloquence is something more than a trick of art, or a juggle with words; when it has a higher aim than to tickle the ear, or to charm the imagination as the sparkling eye and dazzling scales of the serpent enchant the hovering bird; when it has a higher inspiration than that which produces the "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal" of merely fascinating speech; when it is armed with the thunderbolt of powerful thought, and winged with lofty feeling; when the electric current of sympathy is established, and the orator sends upon it thrill after thrill of sentiment and emotion, vibrating and pulsating to the sensibilities of his hearers, as if their very heart-strings were held in the grasp of his trembling fingers; when it strips those to whom it is

addressed of their independence, invests them with its own life, and makes them obedient to a strange nature, as the mighty ocean tides follow the path of the moon; when it divests men of their peculiar qualities and affections, and turns a vast multitude into one man, giving to them but one heart, one pulse, and one voice, and that an echo of the speaker's,—then, indeed, it becomes not only a delight, but a power, and a power greater than kings or military chieftains can command.

The French philosopher, D'Alembert, goes so far as to say of eloquence, that "the prodigies which it often works, in the hands of a single man, upon an entire nation, are perhaps the most shining testimony of the superiority of one man over another;" and Emerson expresses a similar opinion when he says that eloquence is "the appropriate organ of the highest personal energy." As there is no effort of the human mind which demands a rarer combination of faculties than does oratory in its loftiest flights, so there is no human effort which is rewarded with more immediate or more dazzling triumphs. The philosopher in his closet, the statesman in his cabinet, the general in the tented field, may produce more lasting effects upon human affairs, but their influence is both more slowly felt, and less intoxicating from the ascendency it confers. The orator is not compelled to wait through long and weary years to reap the reward of his labours. His triumphs are instantaneous; they follow his efforts as the thunder-peal follows the lightning's flash. While he is in the very act of forming his sentences, his triumph is reflected from the countenances of his hearers, and is sounded from their lips. To stand up before a vast assembly composed of men of the most various callings, views, passions, and prejudices, and mould them at will; to play upon their hearts and minds as a master upon the keys of a piano; to convince their understandings by the logic, and to thrill their feelings by the

art, of the orator; to see every eye watching his face, and every ear intent on the words that drop from his lips; to see indifference changed to breathless interest, and aversion to rapturous enthusiasm; to hear thunders of applause at the close of every period; to see the whole assembly animated by the feelings which in him are burning and struggling for utterance; and to think that all this is the creation of the moment, and has sprung instantaneously from his fiery brain and the inspiration imparted to it by the circumstances of the hour;—*this*, perhaps, is the greatest triumph of which the human mind is capable, and that in which its divinity is most signally revealed.

The history of every country and of every age teems with the miracles wrought by this necromantic power. Eloquence, as every school-boy knows, was the master-spirit of both the great nations of antiquity,—Greece and Rome. It was not the fleets of Attica, though mighty, nor the valour of her troops, though unconquerable, that directed her destinies, but the words and gestures of the men who had the genius and the skill to move, to concentrate, and to direct the energies and the passions of a whole people, as though they were but one person. When the Commons of Rome were bowed down to the dust beneath the load of debts which they owed their patrician creditors, it was the agonising appeals of an old man in rags, pale and famishing, with haggard beard and hair, who told the citizens that he had fought in eight and twenty battles, and yet had been imprisoned for a debt with usurious interest which he was compelled to contract, but could not pay, that caused a change of the laws, and a restoration to liberty of those who had been enslaved by their creditors. It was not, as it has been well said, the fate of Lucretia, but the gesture of Brutus waving abroad her bloody knife, and his long hidden soul bursting forth in terrible denunciation, that drove out the Tarquin from Rome,

overthrew the throne, and established the Republic. "It was a father's cries and prayers for vengeance, as he rushed from the dead body of Virginia, appealing to his countrymen, that roused the legions of the Tusculan camp to seize upon the Sacred Mount, and achieve another freedom. And when the Roman Empire was the world, and trophies from every people hung in her capitol, the orator, whether in the senate or in the comitia, shook oracles of the fate of nations from the folds of his mantle." Plutarch tells us that Thucydides, when Archidamus, King of Sparta, asked him which was the best wrestler, Pericles or he,—replied: "When I throw him, he says he was never down, and persuades the very spectators to believe him." The Athenian populace, roused by the burning words of Demosthenes, started up with one accord and one cry to march upon Philip; and the Macedonian monarch said of the orator who had baffled him, —on hearing a report of one of his orations,—"Had I been there, he would have persuaded me to take up arms against myself." We are told that such was the force of Cicero's oratory, that it not only confounded the audacious Catiline, and silenced the eloquent Hortensius,—not only deprived Curio of all power of recollection, when he rose to oppose that great master of enchanting rhetoric,—but made even Cæsar tremble, and, changing his determined purpose, acquit the man he had resolved to condemn. It was not till the two champions of ancient liberty, Demosthenes and Cicero, were silenced, that the triumph of Despotism in Greece and Rome was complete. The fatal blow to Athenian greatness was the defeat by Antipater which drove Demosthenes to exile and to death; the deadly stroke at Roman freedom was that which smote off the head of Tully at Caieta.

In the Dark Ages the earnest tones of a simple private man, who has left to posterity only the modest name of Peter the Hermit, roused the nations to engage in the Crusades,

drove back the victorious crescent, overthrew feudalism, emancipated the serfs, delivered the towns from the oppression of the barons, and changed the moral face of Europe. Two centuries later the voice of a solitary monk shook the Vatican, and emancipated half of Europe from the dominion of Papal Rome. In later ages the achievements of oratory have been hardly less potent. What reader of English history is not familiar with the story of that "lord of the silver bow," the accomplished Bolingbroke, whom the Ministry, when they permitted him to return from exile, dared not permit to re-enter Parliament, lest they should be pierced by his deadly shafts? Who can say what the course of European, or even the world's history would have been, had the British Senate never shaken with the thunders of Fox's, Camden's, or Grattan's eloquence, or had Mirabeau, Vergniaud, Louvet, Barbaroux, and Danton never hurled their fiery bolts from the French tribune? "Who can doubt," says Daniel Webster, "that in our own struggle for independence, the majestic eloquence of Chatham, the profound reasoning of Burke, the burning satire and irony of Barré, had influence on our fortunes in America? They tended to diminish the confidence of the British ministry in their hopes to subject us. There was not a reading man who did not struggle more boldly for his rights when those exhilarating sounds, uttered in the two Houses of Parliament, reached him across the seas." To the effects wrought by the "fulminating eloquence" of the first of these great orators, history has borne abundant testimony. The arbiter of the destinies of his own country, he was also the foremost man in all the world. "His august mind overawed majesty. . . . Without dividing, he destroyed party; without corrupting, he made a venal age unanimous; France sunk beneath him; with one hand he smote the House of Bourbon, and wielded in the other the democracy of England."

We are told that when Mirabeau arose in the National

Assembly, and delivered one of those fiery speeches which, in their union of reason and passion, so remind us of Demosthenes, he trod the tribune with the supreme authority of a master, and the imperial air of a king. As he proceeded with his harangue, his frame dilated; his face was wrinkled and contorted; he roared, he stamped; his hair whitened with foam; his whole system was seized with an electric irritability, and writhed as under an almost preternatural agitation. The effect of his eloquence, which was of the grandest and most impressive kind, abounding in bold images, striking metaphors, and sudden natural bursts, the creation of the moment, was greatly increased by his "hideously magnificent aspect,"—the massive frame, the features full of pock-holes and blotches, the eagle eye that dismayed with a look, the voice of thunder that dared a reply, the hair that waved like a lion's mane. The ruling spirit of the French Revolution, he did, while he lived, more than any other man, "to guide the whirlwind and direct the storm" of that political and social crisis. When the clergy and the nobles obeyed the royal mandate that the National Assembly should disperse, and the Commons remained hesitating, uncertain, almost in consternation, it was his voice that hurled defiance at the King, and inspired the *Tiers-Etat* with courage. When he cried out to the astonished emissary of Lewis: "Slave, go tell your master that we are here by the will of the people, and that we will depart only at the point of the bayonet!" the words sounded like a thunder-clap to all Europe, and from that moment the bondage of the nation was broken, and the fate of despotism sealed.* Startling the critics of the Academy by his bold, straightforward style of oratory, so opposed to the stiff, conventional manner of the day, he showed them that there was "a power of life" in his rude

* It is pretty certain that the language actually used by Mirabeau was less terse and audacious than this: we give the current version.

and startling language,—that the most commonplace ideas could be endowed with electric power; and, had he not died prematurely, he might, perhaps, have dissuaded France from plunging into the gulf of anarchy, and shown a genius for reconstruction only inferior to that which he had displayed as a destroyer.

Among the most memorable displays of oratory, few are more familiar to the ordinary reader than those which took place during the trial of Warren Hastings in Westminster Hall.. It is said that when Burke, with an imagination almost as oriental as the scenes he depicted, described, in words that will live as long as the English language, the cruelties inflicted upon the natives of India by Debi Sing, one of Hastings's agents, a convulsive shudder ran through the whole assembly. Indignation and rage filled the breasts of his hearers; some of the ladies "swooned away;" and Hastings himself, though he had protested his innocence, was utterly overwhelmed. "For half an hour," he said afterwards in describing the scene, "I looked up at the orator in a revery of wonder, and actually felt myself to be the most culpable man on earth."—When Canning, in 1826, closed his famous speech on the King's Message respecting Portugal with the memorable passage: "I looked to Spain in the Indies; I called a New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old," the effect, we are told, was terrific. The whole House was moved as if an electric shock had passed through them: they all rose for a moment to look at him!

A memorable example of the power of eloquence is furnished by the speech of Lord Stanley (afterwards the Earl of Derby) on the Irish Coercion Bill, brought into the House of Commons in 1833. O'Connell had made a powerful speech in opposition, and seemed, says Lord Russell (to whom we are indebted for an account of the scene), about to achieve a

triumph in favour of sedition and anarchy. Lord Derby, in his reply, recalled to the recollection of the House of Commons that, at a recent public meeting, O'Connell had spoken of the House of Commons as 658 scoundrels. "In a tempest of scorn and indignation," says Lord Russell, "he excited the anger of the men thus designated against the author of the calumny. The House which for two hours before seemed about to yield to the great agitator, was now almost ready to tear him to pieces. In the midst of the storm which his eloquence had raised, he (Lord Stanley) sat down, having achieved one of the greatest triumphs of eloquence ever won in a popular assembly by the powers of oratory."

In America the triumphs of eloquence have been hardly less marked than those of England. In the night of tyranny the eloquence of the country first blazed up, like the lighted signal fires of a distracted border, to startle and enlighten the community. Everywhere, as the news of some fresh invasion of liberty and right was borne on the wings of the wind, men ran together and called upon some earnest citizen to address them. The eloquence of that period was not the mere ebullition of feeling; it was the enthusiasm of reason; it was judgment raised into transport, and breathing the irresistible ardours of sympathy.

When in 1761 James Otis, in a Boston popular assembly, denounced the British Writs of Assistance, his hearers were hurried away resistlessly on the torrent of his impetuous speech. When he had concluded, every man, we are told, of the vast audience went away resolved to take up arms against the illegality. When Patrick Henry pleaded the tobacco case "against the parsons" in 1758, it is said that the people might have been seen in every part of the house, on the benches, in the aisles, and in the windows, hushed in death-like stillness, and bending eagerly forward to catch the magic tones of the speaker. The jury were so bewildered as to lose

sight of the legislative enactments on which the plaintiffs relied; the court lost the equipoise of its judgment, and refused a new trial; and the people, who could scarcely keep their hands off their champion after he had closed his harangue, no sooner saw that he was victorious, than they seized him at the bar, and, in spite of his own efforts, and the continued cry of "Order!" from the sheriff and the court, bore him out of the court-house, and, raising him on their shoulders, carried him about the yard in a kind of electioneering triumph. When the same great orator concluded his well-known speech in May, 1775, on behalf of American independence, "no murmur of applause followed," says his biographer; "the effect was too deep. After the trance of a moment, several members of the Assembly started from their seats. The cry, *To arms!* seemed to quiver on every lip and glance from every eye."—Mr. Jefferson, who drew up the Declaration of Independence, declares that John Adams, its ablest advocate on the floor of Congress, poured forth his passionate appeals in language "which moved his hearers from their seats."

Many are familiar with the famous passage in the great speech of Fisher Ames on the British Treaty, in which he depicts the horrors of the border war with the Indians, which would result from its rejection. Even when we read these glowing periods to-day in cold blood, without the tremulous and thrilling accents of the dying statesman, that made them so impressive, we feel the "fine frenzy" of the speaker in every line. An old man, a judge in Maine, who heard the burning words of Ames, declared that as he closed with the climax, "The darkness of midnight will glitter with the blaze of your dwellings. You are a father,—the blood of your sons shall fatten your corn-field: you are a mother,—the war-whoop shall wake the sleep of the cradle,"—the prophecy seemed for a moment a reality. "I shuddered and looked a

little behind me; for I fancied a big Indian with an uplifted tomahawk over me."

William Wirt, himself an orator, tells us that when the "Blind Preacher of Virginia" drew a picture of the trial, crucifixion, and death of our Saviour, there was such force and pathos in the description that the original scene appeared to be, at that moment, acting before the hearers' eyes. "We saw the very faces of the Jews: the staring, frightful distortions of malice and rage. We saw the buffet; my soul kindled with a flame of indignation; and my hands were involuntarily and convulsively clinched." But when, with faltering voice, he came to touch on the patience, the forgiving meekness of the Saviour, His prayer for pardon of His enemies, "the effect was inconceivable. The whole house resounded with the mingled groans, and sobs, and shrieks of the congregation."

The accounts given of the effects wrought by some of Daniel Webster's speeches, seem almost incredible to those who never have listened to his clarion-like voice and weighty words. Yet even now, as we read some of the stirring passages in his early discourses, we can hardly realise that we are not standing by as he strangles the *reluctantes dracones* of an adversary, or actually looking upon the scenes in American history which he so vividly describes. Prof. Ticknor, speaking in one of his letters of the intense excitement with which he listened to Webster's Plymouth Address, says: "Three or four times I thought my temples would burst with the gush of blood; for, after all, you must know that I am aware it is no connected and compacted whole, but a collection of wonderful fragments of burning eloquence, to which his manner gave tenfold force. When I came out, *I was almost afraid to come near to him.* It seemed to me that he was like the mount that might not be touched, and that burned with fire."

As it was the eloquence of Hamilton, spoken and written, which, in no small degree, established our political system, so it was the eloquence of Webster that mainly defended and saved it. When the Federal Constitution, the product of so much sacrifice and toil, was menaced by the Nullifiers of South Carolina, it was the great orator of Massachusetts that sprang to its rescue. As the champion of New England closed the memorable peroration of his reply to Hayne, the silence of death rested upon the crowded Senate Chamber. Hands remained clasped, faces fixed and rigid, and eyes tearful, while the sharp rap of the President's hammer could hardly awaken the audience from the trance into which the orator had thrown them. When, again, over thirty years later, Nullification once more raised its front, and stood forth armed for a long and desperate conflict, it was the ignited logic of the same Defender of the Constitution,—the burning and enthusiastic appeals for "Liberty *and* Union, now and for ever, one and inseparable,"—which, still echoing in the memories of the people, roused them as by a bugle-blast to resistance. It was because Webster, when living, had indoctrinated the whole North with his views of the structure of government, that, when his bones lay mouldering at Marshfield, they were ready to fight as one man against the heresy of Secession. The idol of the American youth, at the stage of their culture when eloquence exerts its most powerful fascination, he had infused into their hearts such a sentiment of nationality, that they sprang to arms with a determination to shed the last drop of their blood, rather than see a single star effaced from the ample folds of the national flag. Few who heard it can forget the potent enchantment worked by the same voice in Faneuil Hall, after the odious Compromise Act of 1850. The orator who had been adored as "godlike," and whose appearance had been a signal for a universal outburst of enthusiasm,—the orator upon whom New Eng-

land had been proud to lavish its honours, was now received with frowning looks and sullen indignation; yet "never," says the poet Lowell, "did we encounter a harder task than to escape the fascination of that magnetic presence of the man, which worked so potently to charm the mind from a judicial serenity to an admiring enthusiasm. There he stood, the lion at bay; and that one man, with his ponderous forehead, his sharp, cliff-edged brows, his brooding, thunderous eyes, his Mirabeau mane of hair, and all the other nameless attributes of his lion-like port, seemed enough to overbalance and outweigh that great multitude of men, who came as accusers, but remained, so to speak, as captives, swayed to and fro by his aroused energy as the facile grain is turned hither and thither in mimic surges by the strong wind that runs before the thundergust."

With the triumphs of sacred oratory it would be easy to fill a volume. Not to go back to the days of John the Baptist, or to those of Paul and Peter, whose words are the very flame-breath of the Almighty, nor even to the days of Chrysostom, the golden-mouthed, who, when, like another Elijah, or John the Baptist risen from the dead, he reappeared among his townsmen of Antioch, after the austerities in the desert to which his disgust at their licentiousness had driven him, denounced their bacchanalian orgies in words that made their cheeks tingle, and sent them panic-stricken to their homes,—who is not familiar with the miracles which Christian eloquence has wrought in modern times? Who has forgotten the story of the "priest, patriot, martyr," Savonarola, crying evermore to the people of Florence? Who is ignorant of the mighty changes, ecclesiastic and political, produced by the blunt words of Latimer, the fiery appeals of Wycliffe, the stern denunciations of Knox? Or what ruler of men ever subjected them more effectually by his sceptre than Chalmers, who gave law from his pulpit for

thirty years; who hushed the frivolity of the modern Babylon, and melted the souls of the French philosophers in a half-known tongue; who drew tears from dukes and duchesses, and made princes of the blood and bishops start to their feet, and break out into rounds of the wildest applause?

What cultivated man needs to be told of the sweet persuasion that dwelt upon the tongue of the swan of Cambray, the alternating religious joy and terror inspired by the silvery cadence and polished phrase of Massillon, or the resistless conviction that followed the argumentative strategy of Bourdaloue,—a mode of attack upon error and sin which was so illustrative of Quintilian, that the great Condé cried out once, as the Jesuit mounted the pulpit, "*Silence, Messieurs, voici l'ennemi!*" What schoolboy is not familiar with the religious terror with which, in his *oraisons funèbres*, the "Demosthenes of the pulpit," Bossuet, thrilled the breasts of *seigneurs* and princesses, and even the breast of that King before whom other kings trembled and knelt, when, taking for his text the words, "Be wise, therefore, O ye kings! be instructed, ye judges of the earth!" he unveiled to his auditors the awful reality of God the Lord of all empires, the chastiser of princes, reigning above the heavens, making and unmaking kingdoms, principalities and powers; or, again, with the fire of a lyric poet and the zeal of a prophet, called on nations, princes, nobles, and warriors, to come to the foot of the catafalque which strove to raise to heaven a magnificent testimony of the nothingness of man? At the beginning of his discourses, the action of "the eagle of Meaux," we are told, was dignified and reserved; he confined himself to the notes before him. Gradually "he warmed with his theme, the contagion of his enthusiasm seized his hearers; he watched their rising emotion; the rooted glances of a thousand eyes filled him with a sort of divine frenzy; his notes became a burden and a hindrance; with impetuous

ardour he abandoned himself to the inspiration of the moment; with the eyes of the soul he watched the swelling hearts of his hearers; their concentrated emotions became his own; he felt within himself the collected might of the orators and martyrs whose collected essence, by long and repeated communion, he had absorbed into himself; from flight to flight he ascended, until, with unflagging energy, he towered straight upwards, and dragged the rapt contemplation of his audience along with him in its ethereal flight." At such times, says the Abbé Le Dieu, it seemed as though the heavens were open, and celestial joys were about to descend upon these trembling souls, like tongues of fire on the day of Pentecost. At other times, heads bowed down with humiliation, or pale upturned faces and streaming eyes, lips parted with broken ejaculations of despair, silently testified that the spirit of repentance had breathed on many a hardened heart.

There is a story told of a French Abbé, that he preached a sermon, on a certain Sunday, of such power that his appalled people went home, put up the shutters of their shops, and for three days gave themselves up to utter despair. Jonathan Edwards, the Calvinistic divine, preached sermons of such force that, under the lash of his fiery denunciation, men cried out in agony, and women rose up in their seats. There have been other preachers who, in moments of general misery, have had equal power of turning the wailing of their people into bursts of thankfulness and joy. "I have heard it reported," says Emerson, "of an eloquent preacher whose voice is not forgotten in this city (Boston), that, on occasions of death or tragic disaster which overspread the congregation with gloom, he ascended the pulpit with more than his usual alacrity, and, turning to his favourite lessons of devout and jubilant thankfulness,—'Let us praise the Lord,'—carried audience, mourners, and mourning along with him, and swept

away all the impertinence of private sorrow with his hosannas and songs of praise."

In our own day the triumphs of eloquence, though of a different kind from those of yore, are hardly less signal than in the ages past. We doubt, on the whole, if the orator was ever tempted by brighter laurels, or had a grander field for the exercise of his art. We live in an age of popular agitation, when, in every free country, the people are becoming more and more the source of all power, and when it is by organised and systematic effort,—by "monster meetings," and appeals made to the constituencies of the country, rather than to the legislature,—that great political changes are worked out. The germs of great events, the first motive-springs of change, have their origin, no doubt, in the closet, in the brains of men of deep thought and wide observation, who are not engaged in the strife and turmoil of the arena. But the people are the great agency by which all revolutions and changes are accomplished, and the two great engines for convincing and moving the people are oratory and the press. Never before were the masses of the people appealed to so earnestly and systematically as now. The title, "Agitator," once a term of contempt, has now become one of honour. Look at England! What mighty changes have been wrought in her political system within the last fifty years by the indomitable energy of the Vincents, the Foxes, the Cobdens, and scores of other speakers, who have traversed the kingdom, advocating Parliamentary Reform, the Repeal of the Corn-Laws, and other measures which were once deemed utopian and hopeless! Scotland, too, has hardly yet recovered from a convulsion which shook society to its foundations, produced by the eloquence of a few earnest men, who declared that "conscience should be free." Who can doubt that, in America, it was the vehement and impassioned oratory of the so-called "anti-slavery fanatics,"—the "hare-brained' 'cham-

pions of "the higher law,"—that precipitated the "irrepressible conflict" which broke the fetters of the slave, and thus removed the most formidable obstacle of the union of North and South, as well as the foulest stain from its escutcheon?

It is natural to associate the gift of eloquence with a few favoured lands, and to imagine, especially, that civilised communities only have felt its influence. But there is no people, except the very lowest savages, to whom it has been denied. There is, doubtless, a vast difference between the voice of an untutored peasant, who never thought of the magic potency dwelling in this faculty, and who, consequently, addresses his fellows in loud and discordant tones, and that of the man who, with an educated mind and a cultivated taste, understands and uses his voice as Handel understood and used the organ; yet there are examples of eloquence in the speeches of Logan and Red Jacket, and other aborigines of America, that will live in the story of that abused race as long as the trees wave in their forests, or the winds sigh among their mountains. Sir Francis Head, in narrating the proceedings of a council of Red Indians which he attended as Governor of Canada, says:—"Nothing can be more interesting, or offer to the civilised world a more useful lesson, than the manner in which the red aborigines of America, without ever interrupting each other, conduct their councils. The calm dignity of their demeanour,—the scientific manner in which they progressively construct the framework of whatever subject they undertake to explain,—the sound argument by which they connect, as well as support it,—and the beautiful wild-flowers of eloquence with which they adorn every portion of the moral architecture they are constructing,—form altogether an exhibition of grave interest; and yet these orators are men whose lips and gums are, while they are speaking, black from the berries on which they subsist."

As we conclude this chapter a sad thought presses itself upon the mind touching that eloquence whose magic effects

we have so faintly depicted: it is that it is so perishable. Of all the great products of creative art, it is the only one that does not survive the creator. We read a discourse which is said to have enchanted all who heard it, and how "shrunken and wooden" do we find its image, compared with the conception we had formed! The orator who lashed himself into a foam,—whose speech drove on in a fiery sleet of words and images,—now seems

"Dull as the lake that slumbers in the storm,"

and we can scarcely credit the reports of his frenzy. The picture from the great master's hand may improve with age; every year may add to the mellowness of its tints, the delicacy of its colours. The Cupid of Praxiteles, the Mercury of Thorwaldsen, are as perfect as when they came from the sculptor's chisel. The dome of Saint Peter's, the self-poised roof of King's Chapel, "scooped into ten thousand cells," the façade and sky-piercing spire of Strasbourg Cathedral, are a perpetual memorial of the genius of their builders. Even music, so far as it is a creation of the composer, may live for ever. The aria or cavatina may have successive resurrections from its dead signs. The delicious melodies of Schubert, and even Handel's "seven-fold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies," may be reproduced by new artists from age to age. But oratory, in its grandest or most bewitching manifestations,—Demosthenes contending for the crown,—the white heat of Cicero inveighing against Antony,—the glaring eye and thunder tones of Chatham denouncing the employment of Indians in war,—the winged flame of Curran blasting the pimps and informers that would rob Orr of his life,—the nest of singing-birds in Prentiss's throat, as he holds spell-bound the thousands in Faneuil Hall,—the look, port, and voice of Webster, as he hurls his thunderbolts at Hayne,—all these can no more be reproduced than the song of the sirens.

The words of a masterpiece of oratorical genius may be

caught by the quick ear of the reporter, and jotted down with literal exactness, not a preposition being out of place, not an interjection wanting; but the attitude and the look, the voice and the gesture, are lost for ever. As well might you attempt to paint the lightning's flash, as to paint the piercing glance which, for an instant, from the great orator's eyes, darts into your very soul, or to catch the mystic, wizard tones, which now bewitch you with their sweetness, and now storm the very citadel of your mind and senses. Occasionally a great discourse is delivered, which seems to preserve in print some of the chief elements of its power. In reading Bossuet's thrilling sermon on the death of Madame Henriette Anne d'Angleterre, we seem to be almost living in the seventeenth century, and to hear the terrible cry which rings through the halls of Versailles,—"*Madame se meurt! Madame est morte!*" and to see the audience sobbing with veiled faces as the words are pronounced. But, in the vast majority of cases, it is but a *caput mortuum* which the most cunning stenographer can give us of that which, in its utterance, so startled or charmed the hearer. The aroma, the finer essences, have vanished,—only the dead husk remains. Again, eloquence, as Pitt says, "is in the assembly," and therefore to appreciate a discourse, we must not only have heard it as delivered, but when and where it was delivered with all its accompaniments, and with the temper of those to whom it was addressed. We need the "fiery life of the moment," the contagion of the great audience, the infectious enthusiasm leaping from heart to heart, the shouting thousands in the echoing minster or senate. We need to see and to hear the magician with his wand in his hand, and on the theatre of his spells. The country preacher, therefore was right, who, when he had electrified his people by an extempore discourse preached during a thunder-storm, and was asked to let them print it, replied that he would do so if they would print the thunder-storm along with it.

CHAPTER II.

IS ORATORY A LOST ART?

In the last chapter we expressed the opinion that the triumphs of eloquence in our own day, though of a different kind from those of yore, are not less signal than in the ages past. We are aware that many persons in England and America,—especially the croakers, *laudatores temporis acti*, and believers in the fabled "golden ages" of excellence,—will deny this statement. Talk to them of the eloquent tongues of the present day,—tell them how you have been thrilled by the music of Gladstone's or Everett's periods, or startled by the thunderbolts of Brougham, Webster, or Bright,—and they will tell you, with a sigh, that the oratory of their predecessors was grander and more impressive. The golden age of oratory, they say, has gone, and the age of iron has succeeded. It is an era of tare and tret, of buying and selling, of quick returns and small profits, and we have no time or taste for fine phrases. If we have perfected the steam-engine, and invented the electric telegraph and the phonograph, we have also enthroned a sordid, crouching, mammon-worshipping spirit in high places; we have deified dulness, and idolised cotton-spinning and knife-grinding, till oratory, which always mirrors the age, has become timid and formal, dull and decorous, never daring or caring to soar in eagle flights, but content to creep on the ground, and "dwell in decencies for ever." Hence we have no masterpieces of eloquence to-day like those with which Demosthenes, or Chatham, or Mirabeau, awed and overwhelmed their hearers. We have no speeches of marrow and pith, abounding in great truths felicitously expressed, terse, epigrammatic sentences, that stick like barbed arrows in the memory, and magnificent metaphors which only genius can coin. We have plenty of

able debaters, but no real orators,—no men "on whose tongue the fiery touch of eloquence has been laid, whose lips the Attic bees have stung with intensity and power." Go to the home of oratory, France, and you will hear the same melancholy plaint. A late French writer, in "The Orators of France," mourning over the decay of eloquence in his native land, declares that the present Chambers are but so many little chapels, where each one places his own image upon the altar, chants magnificats, and pays adoration to himself. The deputies, devoured with the leprosy of political materialism, are but manikins, not men. Deputies of a parish or a fraternity; deputies of a harbour, of a railroad, of a canal, of a vineyard; deputies of sugar-cane or beet-root; deputies of oil or of bitumen; deputies of charcoal, of salt, of iron, of flax; deputies of bovine, equine, asinine interests,—in short, of everything except of France, they represent but obsolete opinions, and are never heard of beyond the range of their own voice.

In every age we hear these doleful Jeremiads; evermore the cry of the present is, "there were giants in *those* days." We are all more or less the victims of that illusion which leads men to idealise and idolise the past. It seems almost impossible for a man who has reached fifty to escape that senile querulousness which leads one to magnify the merits of dead actors and singers, sculptors and painters, and other artists of lang syne. "Memory's geese are always swans." We all fancy with the old Count in "Gil Blas," that the peaches were much larger when we were boys. Burke, who, we think, lived in an age of giants, spoke of it as an age of comparative dwarfs. There are persons who go even farther than the victims of this hereditary illusion; who not only claim for the orators of past centuries,—and especially for those of Greece and Rome,—an immeasurable superiority over those of the present age, but do not hesitate even to

assert that oratory is now almost a lost art. The age of great orators, they say, has gone by, and such have been the changes in society, and in the modes of influencing public opinion, that the Cicero or Demosthenes of antiquity is no more likely to return than the rhapsodist of early Greece or the Troubadour of romance. Just as the improved artillery, the revolver, and the repeating rifle, have rendered swords, sabres, and bayonets cumbrous and useless, so the old-fashioned formal harangues of the British and American senates have given way to the brief, business-like speeches of modern times.

That many plausible reasons may be urged for this belief, we are ready to admit. Oratory, like satire, is fed by the vices and misfortunes of society. Long periods of peace and prosperity, which quicken the growth of other arts, are in some respects fatal to it. Its element is the whirlwind and the storm; and when society is upheaved to its foundations, when the moral and political darkness is thickest, it shines forth with the greatest splendour. As the science of medicine would be useless among a people free from disease, so if there were a Utopia in the world free from crimes and disputes, from commotions and disturbances, there would be no demand for oratory. As Tacitus, (or whoever else was the author of the dialogue on the "Corruptions of Oratory,") has observed, peace, no doubt, is preferable to war, but it is the latter only that forms the soldier. "It is just the same with eloquence; the oftener she enters, if I may so say, the field of battle; the more wounds she gives and receives; the more powerful the adversary with which she contends,—so much the more ennobled she appears in the eye of mankind."

It is a significant coincidence that the period when Athenian oratory was at its height was the period when the Athenian character and the Athenian empire were sunk to the lowest point of degradation. Before the Persian wars, and while

she was achieving those victories which have made the world ring with her name, the eloquence of Athens was in its infancy. At length the crisis came. Disunion crept into her councils; her provinces revolted; her tributaries insulted her; her fleets, which had won such dazzling triumphs over the barbarians, fled before the enemy; her armies, which had so long been invincible, pined in the quarries of Syracuse, or fed the vultures of Ægospotami; the sceptre passed from her hand, and the sons of the heroes who fought at Marathon were forced to bow to the yoke of a Macedonian king. It was now, when the sun of her material prosperity was setting,—when her moral, political, and military character was most degraded,—when the viceroy of a foreign despot was giving law to her people, and she was draining the cup of suffering to its very dregs,—that was seen the splendid dawn of an eloquence such as the world never since has known.

The history of Roman eloquence differs in no essential particular from that of Greece. It was not in the days of the Scipios, of Cincinnatus, and of the Gracchi, that Cicero thundered and Hortensius flashed. It was when "the Eternal City" was convulsed by dissensions, and torn by faction; when the plebeians were arrayed against the patricians, and the patricians against the plebeians; when demagogues and assassins overawed the courts, and the magistrates despaired of the public safety,—that were heard the accents of that oratory which has linked the name of Cicero with that of the conqueror of Æschines. It was out of the crimes of Catiline, and the outrages of Verres and Mark Antony, that sprang the loftiest eloquence that shook the Roman Senate, as it was the galling tyranny of Philip that set on fire the genius of Demosthenes.

Again, besides the revolutionary atmosphere, there was another circumstance which in the ancient states stimulated

the growth of eloquence,—namely, the simplicity of public business, as compared with its vast extent, complexity, and fulness of details, in modern times. Living, in the days of their luxury, by the spoliation of foreign states, instead of by the labour of their own hands, the citizens had leisure for the consideration of public questions, which were generally of the simplest kind. Peace or war, vengeance for public wrongs, or mercy to prostrate submission, national honour and national gratitude,—topics appealing to the primal sensibilities of man,—were, as De Quincey has observed, the themes of Greek and Roman oratory. The speeches of Demosthenes and the other great orators of antiquity were the expressions of intense minds on subjects of the deepest moment, and therefore the distinguishing feature of their oratory was vehemence. Speaking on questions upon whose decision hung the very existence of his country, the orator could not be expected to speak temperately; he could not believe that there were two sides to the question, and that conflicting views were equally reconcilable with patriotism in those who held them. To-day the circumstances in which the parliamentary orator is placed are entirely different. The legislative assemblies are deliberative bodies, that have grave and weighty business interests to deal with, and hard practical knots to untie. Nineteen-twentieths of the business that comes before them is of a kind that affords no scope for eloquence. The multiplicity and detail of modern affairs, abounding in particulars and petty items, tend to stifle and suffocate it.

Go into the British Parliament or the American Congress, and the theme of debate will be,—what? In all probability a road or a bridge bill, a bill to demonetise or to remonetise silver, a bill to subsidise a steamship or railway corporation, or to establish a new post-route. A man who should discuss these questions as if they were questions of life

and death, would only make himself a laughing-stock. Even in Queen Caroline's case the House of Lords barely refrained from laughing, when Brougham knelt to beseech the peers. The great majority of the questions that now come up for decision by our political assemblies turn on masses of fact, antecedents in blue-books, tabulated statistics, which all necessitate not only elaborate inquiries, but differences of opinion after the inquiries. The Demosthenic vehemence is, therefore, out of place. Ingenuity and skill, a happy facility of dealing with tangled and complicated facts, judgment, quickness, tact,—and, along with these, the calm, didactic exposition, the clear, luminous statement, a treatment nearly like that of the lecturer,—are more efficacious than the "sound and fury" of the ancient orator. The modern speaker feels that on points of detail it would be ridiculous to be in a passion,—that on matters of business it would be absurd to be enthusiastic; and hence, except on rare occasions, he deals in facts rather than in fancies, in figures of arithmetic rather than in figures of speech, in pounds, shillings, and pence, rather than in poetry. As ancient conversation was more or less oratorical, so modern oratory is more or less conversational in its tone. The cold, calculating, commercial spirit of the age jeers at fine speaking, and the shrewd speaker, therefore, suggests rather than elaborates, talks rather than declaims. The light touch of Peel, Palmerston, or Wendell Phillips, is more effective than the rounded periods of the formal rhetorician.

The same difference extends to forensic eloquence. Mr. Forsyth, the author of "Hortensius," has justly ascribed its decay in England to the excessive technicality which pervades the law. Nothing can be more fatal to eloquence than attention to the fine and hair-splitting distinctions which subtle pleaders delight to raise and pettifoggers to maintain, and to which the courts of justice, both in Great Britain and

the United States, are too prone to lend a ready ear. The overgrown mass, the huge, unwieldy body of the law at the present day, is another impediment to oratory, hardly less formidable. How can a man be eloquent whose best days and hours are spent in digesting the enormous mass of statutes, with the myriad decisions upon them, which now fill the thousand volumes upon his shelves? Talents of a popular kind, the power of giving effect to large and comprehensive views, wither under such a treatment as this. The modern lawyer has no time to gather the flowers of Parnassus. All the fire, energy, and enthusiasm of a young man with noble impulses,—all his native genius and acquired abilities,—die within him, overlaid and smothered by the forms and technicalities of a narrow, crabbed, and barbarous legal system.

On the other hand, Greek and Roman pleadings, instead of relating to technicalities, to the construction of a statute, or to facts of an intricate and perplexing nature, were occupied with questions of elementary justice, large and diffusive, which even the uninstructed could understand, and which connected themselves at every step with powerful and tempestuous feelings. The judges, instead of being the mere interpreters of the law, were also legislators. Instead of being thwarted by the cold vigilance of justice or the restraining formalities of practice,—instead of being hampered by codes, or obstructed by precedents,—the pleader appealed boldly to the passions and prejudices of his hearers. To obtain a verdict of guilt or innocence, by invective or by exaggeration, by appeals to public expediency or by appeals to private hate, was the only end which he proposed to himself. It was the universal right of accusation, that species of magistracy with which each citizen was clothed for the protection of the common liberty, that produced under the Cæsars those infamous denunciations, that lucrative and sanguinary eloquence, of which Tacitus speaks.

In all the precepts given by the ancient orators there is supposed a violent, partial, unjust, and corrupt magistrate who is to be won. A thousand scenes of tumult intermingled incessantly with the solemnities of justice. The forms and the place in which justice was administered; the character of the accusations, so often of a political nature; the presence of the opposed parties; the throng of people present,—all excited and inspired the orator. A modern court-room has little resemblance to that public place in which were pronounced the decrees that abolished the royalties of Asia, where the honours of Rome were conferred, where laws were proposed and abrogated, and which was also the theatre of the great judicial debates. The objective genius of antiquity, it has been well said, is nowhere more vividly illustrated than in its legal proceedings. "The contrast between the formalities of the Old Bailey or Westminster Hall and those of the Areopagus or the Forum, could, if mutually witnessed, have produced in their respective audiences nothing but mutual repulsion. An Englishman can have but little sympathy with that sentimental justice that yields to the exposure of a beautiful bosom, and melts into tears at the sight of a bloody cloak or a gaping wound. A Roman or a Grecian, on the other hand, would have regarded with supreme disgust the impartial majesty of that stern judicature which saw unpitied the weeping children of Strafford, looked unmoved at the bleeding loins of Lilburne, and laughed aloud at the impassioned dagger of Burke."

Again, not only was the stormy atmosphere of ancient States favourable to the development of eloquence, but the system of national education was adapted to the same end. The only object to which it was apparently directed, was to create a breed of national orators. In the ages when the codes of law were comparatively simple, when every civil and political result depended on the art with which the public

speaker mastered and impelled the minds of the audience or the judges, when in fact the orator was the most important political power in the State, the study and practice of oratory were more necessary than in epochs of more complex civilisation; and hence ancient eloquence was more artistic, and demanded far more study than modern. It was, in fact, a fine art,—an art regarded by its cultivators and the public as analogous to sculpture, to poetry, to painting, to music, and to acting. The greatest care, therefore, was taken that children should, first of all, acquire the language in the utmost purity, and that an inclination to the forum should be among their earliest and strongest preferences. It was not by bending painfully over dog's-eared volumes that the Athenian boy gained most of his knowledge. It was by listening to oral discussion, by hearing the great orators speak from the bema, by hearkening to the sages and philosophers in the groves of the Academy, by following the rhapsodists in the streets, or seeing the plays of Æschylus and Sophocles in the theatre, that the Athenian citizen was intellectually trained and instructed. It was from all these sources, but especially from the early habit of engaging in public discussion, that he derived that fertility of resource, that copiousness of language, and that knowledge of the temper and understanding of an audience, which, as Macaulay has remarked, are far more valuable to an orator than the greatest logical powers.

Again, modern oratory has been powerfully influenced by the printing-press, and by the great extension of knowledge which it has caused. When the only way of addressing the public was by orations, and all public measures were debated in popular assemblies, the characters of Orator, Author, Politician, and Editor, almost entirely coincided. Among the ancients, it must be remembered, there was no Press and no representative system of government. Owing to the small

territorial area of each State, and the limited numbers of the free population, each citizen was expected to attend in person at the great popular assemblies, where State matters were debated; and so great was the importance which was attached to these debates, that, among the Greeks, the word *ἰσηγορία*, which etymologically means "equality of rights in debate," was employed as synonymous with *ἰσονομια*, which was used to express "equality in the eye of the law." Indeed, Demosthenes himself, when, in one of his orations, he would vividly contrast democratic States like Athens with oligarchies and tyrannies, represents his countrymen as "those whose government is based on speaking." In times of public excitement, a great speech was a great dramatic politico-national event, and multitudes in Athens and Rome were drawn to the bema and the rostrum by the same instincts that now lead them to crowd to the news-room, and devour the leading articles and the latest news by electric telegraph. Demosthenes and Pericles were the people's daily newspaper, and their speeches the leading articles. The orator was at once the "Times," the "Saturday Review," the "Edinburgh Review," and a great deal more; he combined in himself the journalist, the debater, the critic, and the preacher, all in one.

In the assembly, the forum, the portico, and the garden, the ancients stood face to face with their great men, and drank in their living thoughts as they fell warm from their lips. "Look," says Tacitus, in the Dialogue already quoted, "look through the circle of the fine arts, survey the whole compass of the sciences, and tell me in what branch can the professors acquire a name to vie with the celebrity of a great and powerful orator. His fame does not depend on the opinion of thinking men, who attend business and watch the administration of affairs; he is applauded by the youth of Rome,—by all who hope to rise by honourable means. The

eminent orator is the model which every parent recommends to his children. Even the common people stand and gaze as he passes by; they pronounce his name with pleasure, and point to him as the object of their admiration. The provinces resound with his praise. The strangers who arrive from all parts have heard of his genius; they wish to behold the man; and their curiosity is never at rest till they have seen his person and perused his countenance. Foreign nations court his friendship. The magistrates setting out for their provinces make it their business to ingratiate themselves with the popular speaker, and at their return take care to renew their homage. The powerful orator has no occasion to solicit preferment,—the offices of prætor and consul stand open to him,—to those exalted stations he is invited. Even in the rank of private citizen his share of power is considerable, since his authority sways at once the senate and the people."

Such were the power and influence of the orator in Greece and Rome till the one was conquered and the other imperialised, when the art declined in both. All this has been changed in modern times, and the effect has been to destroy, to a considerable extent, the distinction between oratory and other productions, and in some degree to diminish the demand for oratory proper. The political orator now speaks less to those who are assembled within the walls of Parliament or Congress than to the public outside. His aim, oftentimes, is not so much to convince and move those into whose faces he looks, as those who will peruse his words on the printed page. He knows that if a thousand persons hear him, ten thousand will read him. Not only the legislator, but the stump orator, and even the advocate on great occasions, address themselves to the reporters. That the new audience is of a different complexion and temper from the old,—that it weighs the speaker's words more carefully and dispassionately, and is

influenced more by his facts and logic, and less by his appeals to the passions,—is obvious. Men fight now with the clenched fist, rather than with the open hand,—with logic more than with rhetoric. The magnetism of personal appearance, the charm of manner, the music of the modulated tone, have lost their old supremacy; while the command of facts, the capacity for "cubic thought," the ability to reason, the power of condensed and vivid expression, have acquired a new value. It is not he who can rouse, thrill, or melt his hearers by his electric appeals, that now exercises the greatest and most lasting influence, but he who can make the most forcible and unanswerable statement,—who can furnish the logic of facts, the watchwords of party, the shibboleths of debate,—who can crush an adversary in a sentence, or condense a policy into a thundering epigram. A thousand presses reproduce his words, and they ring in the brain when the fiery declamation of the merely impassioned orator is forgotten.

The practice of addressing the reporter, a practice unknown in the days of Bolingbroke, Chesterfield, and Chatham, has, in another way, still farther revolutionised the style of public speech-making. As the best reporters fall short of perfect accuracy, many speakers prefer to be their own reporters, in other words, prepare their speeches in manuscript; and now the custom of writing out speeches and committing them to memory, is leading to that of reading them. A large proportion of the so-called "speeches" are "delivered" in this way. Anything more fatal to a speaker's influence,—better fitted to stifle every germ of eloquence,—cannot be imagined. As Sydney Smith asks: "What can be more ludicrous than an orator delivering stale indignation and fervour of a week old; turning over whole pages of violent passions, written out in German text; reading the tropes and apostrophes into which he is hurried by the ardour of his mind; and so

affected at a preconcerted line and page, that he is unable to proceed any further?" Of course there is a gain, in such cases, of precision and accuracy; but the form of the effort has changed. It is not a speech or oration, but a dissertation or essay. The reception given by the House to such performances is just that which might be expected. As they are not designed for the ear of that body, but for the speaker's constituency, the House abandons to the constituency the exclusive enjoyment of them. So strong are the tendencies in this direction, that a writer has gone so far as to predict that the day is not far distant when even lawyers will submit printed arguments to judges and juries, to be read and weighed in the chamber and jury-room, and that the practice of making long harangues will be abandoned as tedious and wasteful of time, and tending to mystify and confuse rather than to enlighten and convince.

There is still another way in which oratory, especially legislative oratory, has been influenced by the press. A century ago, when the newspaper was in its infancy, and had not yet aspired to be an organ of public opinion, the great leaders in debate had access to sources of intelligence which were out of the reach of the public, and even of most members of the legislature. To illumine a subject by novel and original arguments, to startle his hearers by new and unexpected information, was then easy for a speaker; and if there was a political crisis, or the question was a vital one, he was listened to with breathless interest. It is said that not a little of the younger Pitt's success was due to his power of weighting his speeches with facts known only to himself, and letting out secrets, where needful, which told like shells as they drop into an advancing column. It was to the facts brought to light, and the considerations urged in debate, that many representatives looked for the materials by which

to form their judgments and to guide their votes. All this the press, with its unrivalled means of collecting and conveying information, has changed. The Gladstone or Disraeli of the day has no facts or statistics concerning the question of the hour, which are not open to the humblest citizen. Weeks before the final struggle comes, the daily journals have sucked up, from all sources of information, all the facts, arguments, and illustrations pertinent to the subject, like so many electrical machines gathering electricity from the atmosphere into themselves. All the precedents and parallel cases which have the remotest bearing upon the issue, have been preëmpted by the editors and their contributors; and when the unfortunate senator gets on his legs, he finds his arguments anticipated, his metaphors stale, his "thunder" stolen, and his subject in the condition of a squeezed orange.

There is yet another circumstance which has lessened the influence of the orator, at least of the political orator, in modern times, especially within the last century. It is the spirit of party, which steels men's minds against conviction, and renders his impassioned appeals unavailing. In the days when there were no newspapers and no reporters, the representative in a political assembly was comparatively independent of his constituents. His vote upon a measure was determined more or less by the arguments which were marshalled for or against it by the leaders in debate. Now, the chains of party are so strong, he is so cowed by fear of his political chiefs, so hampered by his fear of the electors, that he has almost ceased to be a free agent. In vain does the orator bring forward the weightiest, the most unanswerable reasons for a bill; in vain does he urge its adoption by the most passionate appeals; the Opposition laughs, weeps, applauds, but does not change its votes. The men whom he addresses, at least many of them, have held their political

sentiments till they have become rooted in the very fibres of their being. From their very childhood, they have been fed with the milk of radicalism, or nourished on the strong meat of conservatism, till a change of opinion would involve a change in their mental constitution. If, instead of being thus steeled against conviction, they could be persuaded in a single instance by a hostile orator, they would sacrifice that single instance to the general principles on which their preference is founded. Ferguson of Pitfour, a Scotch member of Parliament, and a supporter of the younger Pitt, was a type of too many representatives. He used to say: "I have heard many arguments which convinced my judgment, but never one that influenced my vote." The party speaker is robbed of half of his eloquence, because he speaks under an evident restraint. His tone is not that of a bold, independent thinker, without which there can be no eloquence of the highest order, but that of an agent. He is shackled by a consciousness of his responsibility; he is thinking of the pledges of the last election, and of the prospects of the next.

That there has been a great change, within a hundred years, in the oratory of the British Parliament, is known to all. In the days of Chatham, and of Fox, Pitt, and Burke, the mere gift of eloquence alone was a passport,—as it was almost the only passport,—to the highest offices in the state. A man could not then so readily ride into office on the shoulders of a mob. But if he could sway the House of Commons, the lack of other abilities was excused. George the Third used to say that Pitt knew nothing of Vattel, and we have the minister's own statement that the only history of England he had read was Shakspeare. Fox led the Opposition in utter ignorance of political economy, and Sheridan failed of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer only because he could not master the mystery of fractions. The speeches made in Parliament were then the topics of common conver-

sation; they influenced the votes of the House; they startled their hearers into admiration; they calmed or roused the passions of the country. No parallel can be cited in later times to the effect produced in the House of Commons by Sheridan's famous harangue upon the "Fourth Charge" against Warren Hastings, or to the spell in which the House was bound by the elder Pitt.

Sir James Mackintosh once observed that the true light in which to consider speaking in the House of Commons was as an animated conversation on public business, and that it was rare for any speech to succeed which was raised on any other basis. Canning held a similar opinion. He said that the House was a business assembly, and that the debates must conform to its predominant character; that it was particularly jealous of ornament and declamation, and that, if they were employed at all, they must seem to spring naturally out of the subject. There must be method also, but this should be felt in the effect rather than seen in the manner,—no formal divisions, set exordiums, or perorations, as the old rhetoricians taught, would do. First and last and everywhere you must aim at reasoning, and if you would be eloquent, you might at any time, but not at an appointed time. Macaulay, in a letter to Prof. Whewell, calls the House "the most peculiar audience in the world. A place where Walpole succeeded, and Addison failed; where Dundas succeeded, and Burke failed; where Peel now succeeds, and where Mackintosh fails; where Erskine and Scarlett were dinner-bells; where Lawrence and Jekyll, the two wittiest men, or nearly so, of their time, were thought bores,—is surely a very strange place."

If in the days of Mackintosh and Canning the House hated rhetoric, and was bent on transacting business, rather than on listening to grand exordiums and studied perorations, to-day it is even more practical, and more fiercely in-

tolerant of fine speeches and abstractions. Government now takes its rank among the sciences, and mere intellectual cleverness, unallied with experience, information, and character, has little weight or influence. The leaders of Conservatism and Liberalism are no longer men who have the art of manufacturing polished and epigrammatic phrases, but those who are skilled in the arts of Parliamentary fence and management, and who have made statecraft the study of their lives. These men, though they hem, and haw and stammer, and can hardly put their sentences together in logical order, take their seats on the Treasury bench as Secretaries of State, while the mere orators, who have no special experience or information, sit on the back benches or below the gangway. Indeed, according to the testimony of an able reviewer, it has even been the custom of late to decry oratorical powers, as tending to dazzle and mislead, rather than to instruct and to edify; and to praise the dull, dry harangue of the plodding man of business, who crams down the throat of his audience a heap of statistical facts, and then wonders to find his hearers yawning or asleep, rather than the brilliant speech of the trained orator, who enlivens his theme with the sallies of wit, and adorns it with the graces of imagery. So great a change has taken place, even within the last half century, that the House is now little more than a place where five or six hundred gentlemen meet to do business, very much after the fashion of a board of bank directors. Disraeli, Bright, and Gladstone indulge in no such bursts of oratory as shook the senate in the latter half of the eighteenth century. They state their views plainly, tersely, with little preambling and little embellishment; and having delivered themselves of what they had to say, they conclude as abruptly as they began. Occasionally speeches of a more ambitious kind are heard in the House; but they are so few that their contrast to the ordinary tone of the debates is only the more glaring.

From all these considerations it is evident that oratory no longer occupies the place which it once did, before the discovery of "the art preservative of arts," and the general diffusion of knowledge. It is no longer the only effective weapon of the statesman and the reformer. There are no potentates now that, like Philip of Macedon, would offer a town of ten thousand inhabitants for an orator. But shall we therefore hastily conclude that eloquence is a useless art,—that time and labour spent in its study is wasted? Is it, indeed, true that the orator's occupation has gone,—that the newspaper has killed him,—that his speech is forestalled by the daily editorial, which, flying on the wings of steam, addresses fifty thousand men, while he speaks to five hundred? By no means. Eloquence is not, and never will be, a useless art. In one form or another, it is immortal, and, so long as there are human hearts beating with hope and fear, love and passionate hatred, can never perish. It may no longer enjoy a monopoly of influence, as before the days of Gutenberg and Furst; the form and tone of society may change, demanding different styles of oratory in different ages; but wherever human beings exist who have souls to be thrilled, the public speaker will find scope for the exertion of his powers. "Wherever," as Emerson says, "the polarities meet, wherever the fresh moral sentiment, the instinct of freedom and duty, comes in direct opposition to fossil conservatism and the thirst of gain, the spark will pass."

Man, in short, so long as he is a social being, will never cease, in public as well as in private, to talk. Extend the empire of the press to whatever point you will,—double, treble, and quadruple its power,—and yet the day will never come when this "fourth estate of the nation" can do the entire work of the orator. In every civilised community,—at least, in every free country,—it will still be necessary to cite precedents and analyse testimony and enforce great prin-

ciples in the courts, to explain measures in the halls of legislation, to rouse and move men from the platform and the hustings, and, above all, to plead with men in the house of God. Not a day passes in which it is not in the power of a persuasive tongue to exert some influence, for good or evil, over the will, judgments, and actions of men; and so far is it from being true that oratorical gifts in this age are comparatively useless, that there is probably no other accomplishment which, when possessed even in a moderate degree, raises its possessor to consideration with equal rapidity, none for which there is a more constant demand in the senate, at the bar, on the hustings, and in almost every sphere of professional labour. Even should we admit all that has been claimed regarding the impoverished condition to which civil eloquence has been reduced in modern times by the complexity of business, it must still be remembered that, as De Quincey has observed, oratory has received a new dowry of power, and that of the highest order, in the sanctities of our religion, a field unknown to antiquity, since the Pagan religions produced no oratory whatever.

Again, it should be remembered that the political platform offers a field of oratory not inferior to any it has enjoyed during the world's history. Chained or muzzled in the courts, and scorned in the legislature, it may here spurn the earth with its broadest pinions, and wing its flight, without let or hindrance, to the "highest heaven of invention." The Platform is the stage on which reformers and enthusiasts of every kind, civil, political, moral, and financial, come to present their respective theories to the people, and to organise those movements, that "pressure from without," those manufactures of public opinion, which are now relied upon as the great means of revolutionising legislatures and changing the laws. At the "monster meetings" which are there addressed, the orator is restricted by no five-minute

rule, but can expatiate at will, convincing his hearers by facts and logic, convulsing them with wit and humour, or rousing them by his fiery appeals, like another Antony "moving the very stones of Rome to rise and mutiny." Besides this, the lecture-room affords still another field for almost every species of eloquence,—a field which is more and more occupied at each succeeding year, and which was altogether unknown to the orators of antiquity.

It is true there are no schools of rhetoric now, in which the entire education of a young man is directed to make him an orator. It is true, also, that the style of speaking which was irresistible in an ancient assembly,—an assembly made up of men "educated exactly to that point at which men are most susceptible of strong and sudden impressions, acute, but not sound reasoners, warm in their feelings, unfixed in their principles, and passionate admirers of fine composition," is not the most influential now. The exclamations and tropes which produced the mightiest effects upon the sensitive populace of Athens or Rome, would now, with whatever modulation or gesture they might be declaimed, make but little impression upon a legislative assembly. The oratorical device by which Scipio Africanus shook off a charge of peculation, would hardly avail a modern Chancellor of the Exchequer or Secretary of the Treasury. If President Grant had been impeached before the United States Senate, it would hardly have helped his case to say, "This day last year I won the battle of Chattanooga; therefore why debate?" The day has gone by, too, when the mere objective features of oratory, the statuary and the millinery, were as potent almost as the sentiments uttered; and why? Nobody can doubt that, as another has said, if the ancient oratory were in demand now, it would wake from the sleep of two thousand years without the aid of the rhetorician. But the truth is, it is to the very superiority of our civilisation to that of the

ancients, that the revolution in oratory, and the apparent diminution of its influence, are owing. Instead of lamenting, we should rejoice that we no longer live on that volcanic soil which in former ages produced fiery orators in such abundance. It is because society is no longer under the sway of a few leading men,—because revolutions, tumults, and popular commotions, have ceased to be the chief business of life,—because knowledge has been generally diffused, men have learned to think for themselves, and the free nations of the earth are disposed to rest the security of the state and of individuals on the broad foundations of laws and institutions, and not on popular caprice or the power of any one man, however wise or able,—that modern eloquence has assumed a character so different from the ancient, and is regarded by many as comparatively cold and tame.

It is one of the proudest distinctions of modern society that the ancient power of individuals is lessened; that it is no longer possible for a great man, by violence or artful contrivance, to overthrow a state; that he is continually taught that the world can do without him, and that, if he would do the greatest good, he must combine with other men, rather than be their master or dictator. It is not by absorbing all power into himself, and becoming at once the brain, the tongue, and the hand of a whole people, that the man of genius to-day is to promote the happiness or the glory of the state to which he belongs, but by an open influence on public opinion and a wise co-operation with others, who are jealous of their rights, and will not place them at the mercy of one man, however wise or great. The orator, therefore, however rare or dazzling his gifts, can no longer be the despot that he once was, either for good or for evil. It is no longer by his agency chiefly that public opinion is formed or expressed, but by private discussion, by the interchange of sentiments at the fireside, in the street, at the exchange, and, above all,

by the agency of the press and the telegraph. Even the character of public discussions has changed. A modern debate, it has been truly said, is not a struggle between a few leading men for triumph over each other and an ignorant multitude; the orator himself is but one of the multitude, deliberating with them upon the common interests; and, instead of coming to a raw, unenlightened audience, who have never weighed the subjects upon which he is to address them, and who are ready to be the victims of any cunning and plausible speaker who can blind them by his sophistry, dazzle them by his rhetoric, or captivate them by his honeyed accents, he finds that he is speaking to men who have read, thought, and pondered upon his theme, who have already decided opinions, and care less to hear his eloquence than to know what his eloquence can do for the question.

From all this it is evident that the demand for oratory is not less than in former ages, but that a different style of oratory is demanded. Because imagination and passion do not predominate in modern eloquence, but hold a subordinate place; because the orator speaks to the head as well as to the heart of his hearers, and employs facts and logic more than the flowers of fancy; because his most fiery and burning appeals are pervaded with reason and argument as well as with passion, it by no means follows that his power is curtailed. As well might we conclude that the earthquake and the tempest are the mightiest agencies in nature because their results are instantaneous and visible, and that the gentle rain, the dew, and the sunshine are feeble in comparison, because they work slowly, quietly, and unseen. Is it a task less noble to convince than to inflame mankind? Does a sudden burst of feeling require a greater power or intensity of mind than a long chain of reasoning? Has not argument as well as explosion its eloquence, and may it not be adorned with as splendid illustrations?

The truth is, the modern orator has no less, perhaps even more influence, than the ancient, but he acts more slowly and by degrees. He wins his triumphs of conviction, not in the very hour he speaks, but in the course of weeks, and months, and years. It is not by isolated successes, but in the aggregate, by reiteration, by accumulation, that he prevails. As one writer has beautifully said, the enchanted spear is not without its place among the weapons of our oratorical armory; but, like that of Ariosto, it only fells the enemy to the ground, and leaves him to start up again unwounded. Fine sentiments, well turned and polished periods, have still more or less of their old charm with our deliberative assemblies; their effects may be seen in the pleased looks, the profound silence, or the applause of the listeners; but they are not seen in the final enumeration of the ayes and noes. The great majority of the members contrive to break the enchanter's spell before they vote. But though the influence of individual speeches may be comparatively slight, the influence of the entire eloquence of a leading speaker may be very great. The effects of his oratory may be none the less real, because they are gradual and hardly perceived; none the less powerful, because it is a slow fire, and not a thunderbolt. It has been justly said that there is for every man a statement possible of that truth which he is most unwilling to receive,—a statement possible, so broad and so pungent that he cannot get away from it, but must either bend to it or die of it. By dint of perseverance and reiteration the orator may produce an impression which no single blow, however vigorously struck, would make. Every impression, however faint, leaves the hearer more apt for impression in future by the same hand. A lodgment is made in his heart, and if it be steadily followed up, though he cannot be stormed, he may be sapped, and at last find it convenient to capitulate.

Again, in spite of the party whip, in spite of the utmost perfection of party drill, there are occasional great crises in public affairs,—extraordinary periods,—when men will burst away from the ranks, and vote according to their convictions. As well might the sands of the desert expect to be unstirred by the winds, and to remain in a solid mass, as parties expect that they will remain unchanged by the tornado of eloquence, —the whirlwind and storm of oratory,—that at such times sweeps over them.

More than all, *character* is an important factor in modern eloquence. It is his virtues, his stability, his known zeal for the right and the true, that quite as much as the magnetism of his looks, his siren voice, his graces of address, and electric periods, must win for the orator attention and confidence now. It is the man behind the words that must give them momentum and projectile force. The impression which every speaker makes on his fellows, is the moral resultant, not only of what he *says*, but of all that he has grown up *to be;* of his manhood, weak or strong, sterling or counterfeit; of a funded but unreckoned influence, accumulating unconsciously, and spending itself, as the man is deep or shallow, like a reservoir, or like a spout or an April shower. Especially in times of civil commotion, in great crises, when public interests are imperilled, when war or anarchy threatens the land, is this element of oratory most potent. It is no festival eloquence, no vain mockery of art, that will then meet the exigency, but the sincere, heartfelt appeals of a speaker whose whole life has exemplified the sentiments he enforces, and who is known to be willing to give his life, if need be, in defence of his principles. Thus supported, the faculty of speech is power,—power such as no other faculty can give, and we may say of it in the words of an eloquent writer: "It is political power; it is statesmanship. No recommendation can supply the absence of its prestige. Splendid abilities, the utmost lite-

rary renown, are without it insufficient testimonies. Dissociated from it, the historian of the Roman Empire lingers below the gangway. Assisted by it, a cornet of horse becomes the arbiter of Europe."

Finally, it should not be forgotten that while the ancient orator enjoyed certain advantages which are denied to his successor at the present day, these are compensated in a great measure by the prodigious extension of knowledge, and the consequently greatly increased number and variety of ideas and illustrations which are at the command of the modern orator. As far as the world,—we had almost said, the universe,—made known by science to the moderns exceeds that known to the ancients, so far do the facts and ideas which the speaker of the nineteenth century may employ, surpass in multitude, variety, and grandeur, those which were at the disposal of the most brilliant or potent genius of antiquity. Not only have the vast additions made to human knowledge by the discoveries of the physical geographer, the geologist, the chemist, the botanist, the natural philosopher, and the astronomer, furnished a store of new ideas, allusions, and images, with which to captivate, startle, or enlighten an assembly, but history has replenished her storehouses with myriads of new political precedents and examples of heroism and virtue; modern poetry has added its gems of thought and expression,—its charmed words,—to those which antiquity has bequeathed to us; and, more than all, the Christian religion has opened a new fountain of inspiration, and furnished the orator with a store of thoughts, images, and associations, which, whether fitted to please and inspire, or to awe and appal, are more powerful than any others in moving the human heart.

To conclude,—in comparing the influence of ancient and modern oratory, we have spoken of some of the changes which have taken place within two centuries in modern

British eloquence. There is still another change which it may not be improper to consider for a few moments in this place. Why is it that parliamentary speeches, both in England and America, are now adorned (or disfigured, as the reader pleases,) with so few quotations from the classics? Is it because the age is less pedantic than formerly? or because the legislators of this century have less knowledge of the Greek and Roman authors, and less taste for them, than the legislators of the eighteenth century? Certain it is that the apt and telling quotations for which Horace and Virgil used to be racked, are heard no more in our political assemblies. A great speech unadorned by a few Latin verses was a rarity in the days of Pitt; and the English poets, too, of which Mr. Bright has now a monopoly, were never long neglected. Burke quoted Horace, Lucan, and Juvenal; gems from Virgil sparkle in almost all of his speeches; and to brilliants borrowed from Milton some of his finest passages owe half of their effect. Fox, though a fine classic, quoted rarely, and then from Virgil;* but some of Pitt's most happy effects were produced by apt quotation. His mind was so thoroughly steeped in classical literature, that it colours his speeches "like the shifting, varying, yet constantly prevalent hue in shot silk." His allusion to the classics and

* Lord Lytton, in his admiable essays on "Life, Literature, and Manners," observes that "in the Fox of St. Stephen's, the nervous reasoner from premises the broadest and most popular, there is no trace of the Fox of St. Anne's, the refining verbal critic, with an almost feminine delight in the filigree and trinkets of literature. At rural leisure, under his apple-blossoms, his predilection in scholarship is for its daintiest subtleties; his happiest remarks are on writers very little read. But place the great critic on the floor of the House of Commons, and not a vestige of the fine verbal critic is visible. His classical allusions are then taken from passages the most popularly known. And, indeed, it was a saying of Fox's, that 'no young member should hazard in Parliament a Latin quotation not found in the Eton Grammar.'"—*Caxtoniana, Vol. I., p.* 353.

quotations from them helped largely to make his fame. In later times Canning, who was a fine classical scholar, sprinkled his speeches with felicitous quotations from the Latin poets.

In the courts of justice also striking effects used to be produced by well-chosen bits from Virgil, Martial, and Horace.

At the present day, with the exception of Gladstone, who introduces a new bit of Virgil into every fresh speech, no English or American orator adorns his speeches with jewels from the ancient classics. The late Lord Palmerston startled the public a few years ago with a quotation from Seneca; but the practice has nearly passed away. The explanation of the change is, that the age is intensely practical. In the early stages of civilisation oratory and literature are apt to be confounded; but, as society advances, the distinction between them becomes more and more broadly marked. Oratory ceases to talk; writing ceases to be speech-like. The world, in these prosaic, utilitarian times, is becoming every day more impatient of pedantry, of rhetorical display, of everything that favours or savours of long-windedness; and parliamentary and forensic orators, knowing this fact, try to speak tersely and to the point, avoiding everything that is merely ornamental. It is said by a traveller that the wild Indian hunter will sometimes address a bear in a strain of eloquence, and make a visible impression on him; but whatever may be the taste of Indians and bears, it is certain that civilised men, in proportion as they increase in culture, will avoid whatever is high-flown in oratory, study brevity and plainness, and keep to the subject before them.

CHAPTER III.

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE ORATOR.

Of all the efforts of the human mind, there is no one which demands for its success so rare a union of mental gifts as eloquence. For its ordinary displays the pre-requisites are clear perception, memory, power of statement, logic, imagination, force of will, and passion; but, for its loftiest flights, it demands a combination of the most exalted powers,—a union of the rarest faculties. Unite in one man the most varied and dissimilar gifts,—a strong and masculine understanding with a brilliant imagination; a nimble wit with a solid judgment; a prompt and tenacious memory with a lively and fertile fancy; an eye for the beauties of nature with a knowledge of the realities of life; a brain stored with the hived wisdom of the ages, and a heart swelling with emotion,—and you have the *moral* elements of a great orator. But even these qualifications, so seldom harmonised in one man, are not all. Eloquence is a physical as well as an intellectual product; it has to do with the body as well as with the mind. It is not a cold and voiceless enunciation of abstract truth; it is truth warm and palpitating,—reason "permeated and made red-hot with passion." It demands, therefore, a trained, penetrating, and sympathetic voice, ranging through all the keys in the scale, by which all the motions and agitations, all the shudderings and throbbings of the heart, no less than the subtlest acts, the nimblest operations of the mind,—in fine, all the modifications of the moral life,—may find a tone, an accent. The eye as well as the lips, the heaving chest and the swaying arm, the whole frame quivering with emotion, have a part; and the speech that thrills, melts, or persuades, is the result of them all combined. The orator needs, therefore, a stout bodily frame,

especially as his calling is one that rapidly wears the nerves, and exhausts the vital energy.

A man may have the bow of Ulysses, but of what use is it, if he has not strength to bend it to his will? His arrows may be of silver, and gold-tipped; they may be winged with the feathers of the very bird of Paradise; but if he cannot draw them to the head, and send them home to the mark, of what value are they to him? The most potent speakers, in all ages, have been distinguished for bodily stamina. They have been, with a few remarkable exceptions, men of brawny frame, with powerful digestive organs, and lungs of great aërating capacity. They have been men "who, while they had a sufficient thought-power to create all the material needed, had pre-eminently the explosive power by which they could thrust their materials out at men. They were catapults, and men went down before them." Burke and Fox were men of stalwart frame. Mirabeau had the neck of a bull, and a prodigious chest out of which issued that voice of thunder before which the French chamber quailed in awe. Brougham had a constitution of lignum-vitæ, which stood the wear and tear of ceaseless activity for more than eighty years. Daniel Webster's *physique* was so extraordinary that it drew all eyes upon him; and Sydney Smith could describe him only as "a steam-engine in breeches." Chalmers had a large frame, with a ponderous brain, and a general massiveness of countenance which suggested great reserved strength, and reminded those who watched it in repose of one of Landseer's or Thorwaldsen's lions. Even those orators who have not had giant frames, have had, at least, closely-knit ones,—the bodily activity and quickness of the athlete. It was said of Lord Erskine that his action sometimes reminded one of a blood-horse. When urging a plea with passionate fervour, his eye flashed, the nostril distended, he threw back his head, "his neck was clothed with thunder." There was in him the magnificent

animal, as well as the proud and fiery intellect, and the whole frame quivered with pent-up excitement. Curran could rise before a jury, after a session of sixteen hours, with a brief intermission, and make one of the most memorable arguments of his life. The massive frames of O'Connell and John Bright, England's greatest living orator, are familiar to all.

Besides all these qualifications, there are others hardly less essential to the ideal orator. He must have the continuity of thought which is requisite for a prolonged argument, and the ready wit which can seize and turn to use any incident which may occur in the course of its delivery. Last, but not least, is demanded that commanding *will*, which, as it is one of the most valuable mental gifts, is also one of the rarest, and is still more rarely found in union with the brilliant and dazzling qualities that are the soul of every art which is to subdue or captivate mankind.

In view of the extraordinary qualifications required for the highest eloquence, it is not strange that it is so uncommon. A great orator,—one who has perfectly grasped the art of bodying forth to eye and ear all there is in him, and who utters accordingly great thoughts and great feelings, is a most rare and magnificent creation of the Almighty. There is a well-known saw which declares that "the poet is born, the orator is made;" but nothing can be more absurd than this distinction. Both are *born*, and both are *made*. As the poet, however gifted, requires much and careful self-culture to produce the finest verse, so the orator, however Herculean his industry, needs a basis of native genius, as well as incessant study and practice, to reach the loftiest heights of eloquence. Without the native faculty, the inborn genius, he may become a fluent declaimer, but in vain will he covet the grand triumphs of the rostrum. The profoundest reflection and the most exhaustless knowledge are unavailing here. Nature only it is that can inspire that rapturous enthusiasm,

that burning passion, that "furious pride and joy of the soul," which calls up the imagination of the orator,—that makes his rhetoric become a whirlwind, and his logic, fire.

The grandest passages, the most thrilling bursts, in the annals of eloquence, have been those which have cost the least trouble; for they came as if by inspiration. Like a chariot-wheel in violent motion, the soul of the orator catches fire in the swiftness of its movement, and throws off those divine flashes which fascinate mankind. Chatham's indignant burst in reply to the Duke of Richmond was of this character, and who does not do homage to its lofty grandeur? Thurlow's scathing reply to the Duke of Grafton, when the latter had taunted him with the meanness of his extraction,—Grattan's overwhelming denunciation of Flood,—Curran's blasting denunciations of the government and its bribed informers, amid the clanking of arms that were pointed at his heart,—were all such gushes of inspiration. Who that reads Henry's burning speeches can doubt that his most thrilling appeals were prompted by a similar flush of feeling? And if we go back to the great orators of antiquity, how strikingly is this exemplified in their most memorable triumphs! In every case we find that oratory, like the inspiration of the poet, or the brilliant conceptions of the painter, flows from a source which is beyond the reach of human ken. The essential secret is a gift of God, and in vain do we try to grasp it and to describe it by seizing its mere forms. As Webster has said, "Labour and learning may toil for it; but they will toil in vain." It was not from rules and precepts only that Demosthenes derived that eloquence which is represented as lightning, bearing down every opposer. No study,—no elaborate preparation,—could have produced those electric appeals,—"that disdain, anger, boldness, freedom, involved in a continual stream of argument, which make his orations the most perfect of oratorical discourses."

To all such orators the secret of their grandest successes was doubtless as much a mystery as to their hearers. They had arranged nothing,—prepared nothing. A leading idea,—a central thought,—was present to the mind; but the distribution of the figures, and the harmonious adaptation of the colours, were left to that wonderful influence which directs genius and consecrates it to immortality.

Socrates used to say that "all men are sufficiently eloquent in that which they understand;" but it would have been more correct to say that no man can be eloquent on a subject which he does not understand; and it is equally certain that no man can be eloquent who has not certain mental and physical gifts as well as knowledge. Dr. Horace Bushnell says, in one of his lectures, that forty hundred pulpits are wondering that there are no more of the eloquent ministers for *them*. As well might he wonder that in every village there is no Phidias or Raphael, and on the wall of every church no Last Supper, in fresco, by Da Vinci. Excellence, by its very definition, is exceptional, and in oratory it is even rarer than in sculpture or painting.

The names of all the men in ancient times, who, by the common consent of their contemporaries, had reached the highest pinnacle of eloquence, may be counted on the fingers of one hand. Greece boasted her three great dramatic poets, besides her epic; but she produced but one Demosthenes. The names of Æschines, Lysias, and Hyperides have, indeed, survived the wrecks of time; but they were rather finished rhetoricians than masters of the oratorical art. The fame of Roman oratory is upheld by Cicero alone. Calvus, Cælius, Curio, Crassus, Hortensius, Cæsar, rose one above another; but the most eloquent of these lags far behind the master. Cicero himself had so lofty an ideal of his art, that he was dissatisfied not only with his own performances, but with those of Demosthenes. The number of great orators in

modern times is almost equally small. The pulpit and political eloquence of France, whose Celtic genius is peculiarly oratorical, boasts of but two great names, Bossuet and Mirabeau, that are comparable with those of her great dramatists; and fertile as Great Britain has been in oratorical genius during upwards of a century, she has never, during all her epochs of revolution and senatorial conquest, from the days of Bacon to those of Bright, produced a single public speaker worthy to rank with Milton or Shakspeare.

No doubt many persons have enjoyed, for a time, great fame and influence without some of the qualities which we have named as essential to the perfect orator. A brilliant imagination and a sparkling wit may blind us for a while to the lack of a solid judgment; and vehement action or cogent reasoning may make us for the moment forget a squeaking voice, an ugly face, or a diminutive figure. John Randolph had a short, small body, perched upon high crane legs, so that, when he stood up, you did not know when he was to end; yet he commanded the attention of the House of Representatives, in spite of his gaunt figure and his ear-splitting scream; and Wilberforce was a power in Parliament, though he had but a pigmy body and a voice weak and painfully shrill. Boswell, who heard him in 1784 at York, wrote to a friend: "I saw what seemed a mere *shrimp* mount upon the table; but, as I listened, he grew and grew until the shrimp became a whale." Richard Lalor Sheil thrilled the Irish people, notwithstanding his dwarfish frame, his ungraceful action, and a voice so harsh and violent as often to rise to a positive shriek. The most magical of American preachers, Summerfield, the stories of whose oratorical feats read like a page from the "Arabian Nights," was "femininely feeble, an invalid all his days." Biography abounds with these examples of the mind triumphing over matter; and indeed, there is on record hardly any positive

proof that physical defects, whether of voice or person, have ever completely neutralised the effect of eloquent thoughts and sentiments, when the spirit that kindles them was really in the man,—when the elements of oratory were deep-seated in his soul. Nevertheless it is certain that few men even *aspire* to eminence as public speakers to whom Nature has been niggard of the proper physical gifts; and, though one may sway the hearts of his fellow-men without a harmonious or sonorous voice, an expressive countenance, an imposing person, and the other bodily attributes which are essential to the full charm of eloquence, yet there is scarcely an instance of a man's rising to the loftiest heights of oratory without them.

Again, it is evident that, for temporary success, even vulgar qualities may be the most efficient, and the orator may owe his triumphs to the use of arts which he secretly despises. As immediate influence, not lasting fame, is usually the object for which the speaker is striving, he must, of course, conform, in a certain degree, to the tastes of those he addresses and to the ruling passions of the hour, and hence the quality of his appeals must depend, in a great degree, upon the intelligence or ignorance, the nobleness or vulgarity, of his hearers. The exigencies of modern society, and especially of modern political warfare, have called into being a class of public speakers whose efforts fall as far below those of the ideal orator in grandeur and beauty as they excel them, occasionally, in immediate utility. It is not merely in the degree, but also in the nature of its excellence, that the speeches of these two classes differ. While with the one class oratory is a severe and exacting art, demanding the closest application, and aiming not merely to excite the passions or sway the judgment for the time being, but also to produce a deep and permanent impression,—perhaps to produce models for the delight and admiration of mankind,—the aim of the other

class is simply a temporary effect, an immediate result, to which all other considerations are sacrificed. While the former speak rarely, and at long intervals, during which they saturate their minds with their themes, casting their thoughts into such moulds as are best fitted to enhance their intrinsic worth or beauty, the latter are always ready with facts, arguments, and real or simulated enthusiasm, to champion any cause or measure that party interests may require. While the speeches of the one class, at once charming by their intrinsic beauty, and compelling conviction by their power, are a study for the intellect and a pleasure to the imagination, and are read and studied for ages as models of the oratorical art, as men study the poems of Milton or Tennyson, or the paintings of Raphael or Titian, the effusions of the other, deriving their interest from extraneous causes, that cease with the excitement of the hour, produce an immediate effect, which is testified by applause or votes, but, after a few days, or months, or years, are for ever forgotten. It is still true, therefore, that while great influence, and even temporary fame, may be acquired without the co-operation of all the qualities we have enumerated, yet eloquence of the highest order,—the divine art which "harmonises language till it becomes a music, and shapes thought into a talisman,"—demands the rare union of gifts we have named.

It is a noteworthy fact that while every civilised country and every age of civilisation has had its eloquent men, the great speakers have generally appeared in clusters, not singly, and at long intervals of time. By some mysterious, inexplicable law, the divine afflatus of genius comes rushing on a particular generation, and a brilliant galaxy of orators appears in some country, perhaps in several countries, at once. As the great painters and sculptors appeared together in the Middle Ages,—as the great musical composers came in one age,—as the great dramatists of English literature belong to

one reign,—and as the great poets of this century sang together immediately after the French Revolution,—so the most illustrious orators have blazed out in the intellectual heavens, not at long intervals or as "bright, particular stars," but suddenly and in brilliant constellations. Of these, the most splendid in modern times have been those which distinguished the age of Louis XIV. and the period of the Revolution in France, the age of George III. in England, and in America the years of the Revolution and the second quarter of the present century.

Having thus enumerated the qualities which constitute the orator, let us proceed to notice some of the principal ones more in detail. Of course, it is assumed that he has the necessary stock of knowledge,—a proper fund of information to draw from, both general and particular,—and that with the special information touching his theme his mind is *saturated.* There is no art that can teach a man to be eloquent without knowledge, though some declaimers, who appear, in speaking, to have followed Rousseau's receipt for a love-letter,—namely, to begin without knowing what you are going to say, and to leave off without knowing what you have said,—evidently think otherwise. Cultivation of the voice, memory, and imagination,—attention to style, gesture, and all the arts of speech,—can only render pleasing or impressive the ideas the speaker wishes to communicate; but the materials of his speech,—the facts and ideas themselves,—must be supplied from other sources than rhetoric. There is no man who may not learn to express, simply and naturally, what is in him; but ten thousand teachers cannot qualify him to express any more, for "oratory, like painting and sculpture, is only a language; it is painting and sculpture made vocal and visible."

A gentleman once asked Theodore Parker how he could acquire an impressive delivery, to which he replied as

follows: "That will depend on qualities that lie a good deal deeper than the surface. It seems to me to depend on vigorous feeling and vigorous thinking, in the first place; on clearness of statement, in the next place; and finally, on a vigorous and natural mode of speech. Vigorous feeling and thinking depend on the original talent a man is born with, and on the education he acquires, or his daily habits. No man can ever be *permanently* an impressive speaker, without being first a man of superior sentiments or superior ideas. Sometimes mere emotion (feeling) impresses, but it soon wearies. Superiority of ideas always commands attention and respect."

It is hardly necessary to say that among the physical gifts of the orator, no one is more important than a good VOICE. There is something at once mysterious and marvellous in the power of that complex structure which we call the vocal organs, to move and mould the hearts of men. The waves of sound, those vibrating molecules which, striking the sensitive membrane of the ear, travel thence to the brain, the seat of thought and passion, have a power to awaken and compel deep hidden sympathies, which, in its magical effects, surpasses any other granted to man. It is true that persons skilled in pantomime can communicate many ideas, and even complicated trains of thought, by gestures alone. Among the Romans in the days of Augustus, both tragedies and comedies, which excited tears and laughter, were acted by pantomime only; and Cicero tells us that there was a dispute between himself and the actor Roscius whether a sentiment could be expressed in a greater variety of ways by words or by significant gestures. The Brazilians, it is said, express and interchange thought to a surprising degree by facial motions and gesticulation. The fact, however, that such means are little used among persons who can communicate with each other by the tongue, shows that there is no elo

quence like that of the voice. The speaking eye, the apt gesture, the written word, and the sculptured or painted image are comparatively dead things; it is the voice that has life,—that has power to thrill, to exalt, to melt, to persuade, and to appal. It is the instrument of passion as well as of thought, and is capable of the most wonderful variety of modulations. By distinct and significant sounds, corresponding to certain signs, the emotions are betrayed; and when these sounds reach the ear simultaneously with the appeals of the looks and gestures to the eye, the effect is irresistible. Even persons who are unaffected by music, are often subdued by the gentle accents of the voice, or roused by its deep intonations.

Lord Chatham owed his supremacy in Parliament to his voice as much as to his other gifts. William Pitt, at the age of twenty-one, ruled the British nation by his voice. It was not the comprehensiveness of his reasonings, the power of his sarcasm, the legislative authority of his manner, but the sonorous depths of his voice,—a voice that filled the House of Commons with its sound,—that contributed most to give him the lead which his haughty genius knew how to keep. Burke, with a far loftier genius, with "an imperial fancy that laid all nature under tribute," and a memory rich with the spoils of all knowledge, had less influence as an orator, because he lacked a voice. He gave utterance to his magnificent conceptions in a sort of lofty cry, which tended, it is said, as much as the formality of his discourses, to send his hearers to dinner. It has been justly said that the prodigious power of Mirabeau was in his larynx. He ruled tumultuous assemblies, not by the lightning of his thought, but by the thunder of his throat. Who can tell how far O'Connell was indebted for his power to his wondrous organs of speech? Rising with an easy and melodious swell, his voice filled, says Mr. Lecky, the largest building, and

triumphed over the wildest tumult, while at the same time it conveyed every inflection of feeling with the most delicate flexibility.

The late Earl of Derby, one of the most potent orators in the House of Commons, owed his influence not more to his force of argument, the exquisite analytical power with which he could discuss a question, than to his voice. Full and sonorous when deep themes were to be discussed, it was at other times almost as musical as the notes of an oboe. Mr. Gladstone has a voice as silvery as Belial's. When he led the House of Commons, though he spoke for hours together, yet no hoarseness jarred the music of his tones, and the closing sentences were as clear and bell-like in their cadence as the first. A foreigner, who heard him speak one night, declared that, until then, he had never believed that the English was a musical language; but now he was convinced that it was one of the most melodious of all living tongues. Nearly all the great American orators have been distinguished by similar gifts. Henry Clay's voice had an indescribable charm. It could ring out in trumpet tones, or it could plead in low, plaintive notes, which pierced and thrilled the hearer like the chanting of the Miserere at Rome. It is said that he used to utter the words "The days that are passed and gone," with such a melancholy beauty of expression, that no one could hear them without a tear. Webster's organ-like voice was a fit vehicle equally for his massive, close-knit arguments and for his impassioned appeals, and it was, quite as much as his majestic presence, one of the secrets of his power. It was deep, rich, musical, flexible, and of prodigious volume and force. In his famous speech in reply to Senator Dickinson of New York,—one of the few occasions on which he lost his temper,—when he declared that no power known to man (to any man but Mr. Dickinson), not even hydrostatic pressure, could compress so big a volume of lies into so small

a space as the latter had uttered in a speech which he was even then franking all over the country, Webster pronounced the words in such tones that one of his hearers declared that he felt, all the night afterwards, as if a heavy cannonade had been resounding in his ears. Again, in his eulogy on Adams and Jefferson, when, coming to the climax of his description of John Adams's oratory, he raised his body, brought his hands in front of him with a swing, and, stepping to the front of the stage, said, with a broad swell and an imperious surge upward of the gruff tone of his voice, "He spoke onward, right onward," he threw into that single word "onward" such a shock of force, that several auditors, who sat directly in front of the stage, found themselves involuntarily half rising from their seats with the start the words gave them. The effect was the greater because exceptional. The orator had been speaking calmly, and rose from the dead level of a passionless delivery.

The French critic, Sainte-Beuve, in a fine paper on Montalembert, describes his voice, and adds: "I ask pardon for insisting upon these *nuances;* but the ancients, our masters in everything, and particularly in eloquence, noted them minutely; and a great modern orator has said: 'A man's voice is always an index of his mind.' A mind that is clear, pure, firm, generous, and a little disdainful, betrays all these qualities in its voice. Those persons whose voice is not the expressive and sensitive organ of these slightest shades of the inner man, are not made to produce penetrating impressions as orators." There is no doubt that Thomas Jefferson failed as a speaker simply for lack of voice. He had all the other qualifications; but his voice became guttural and inarticulate in moments of great excitement, and the consciousness of this infirmity prevented him from risking his reputation in debate.

The enormous labour which actors and singers bestow

upon the cultivation of their voices, and its magic results, are well known. Three, four, five, and even six years, was not thought too long a period for the artists of the golden age of song, the eighteenth century, to spend in "making" the organ by which they were to win their triumphs. Who has forgotten the story of Caffarelli, who, for five out of the six years in which he was under the instruction of Porpora, practised upon the passages written on a solitary sheet of music-paper? M. Legouvé, of the French Academy, in an amusing and instructive volume, relates a singular experience of Rachel, which he had from her own lips. One day she recited some tragic passages in the Potsdam gardens before the Emperors of Russia and Germany, the King of Prussia, and several other sovereigns. "That *parterre* of kings," said she "electrified me. Never did I find more powerful accents, —*my voice enchanted my ears!*" A similar incident, in her own experience, is related by Madame Talma. She states in her *Memoirs* that one day, when she was personating Andromache, she felt herself so profoundly moved, that tears ran, not only from the eyes of all the spectators, but from her own also. The tragedy over, one of her admirers sprang into her box, and, seizing her hand, said: "Oh! my dear friend, that was admirable! It was Andromache herself. I am sure that you imagined you were in Epirus, and that you were Hector's widow." "I?" she replied, laughing, "not the least in the world!" "What, then, made you weep?" "My voice." "How, your voice?" "Yes, my voice. That which touched me was the expression which my voice gave to the griefs of Andromache, not those griefs themselves. That nervous shivering which ran over my body, was the electric shock produced upon my nerves by my own accents. I was at once actress and auditress. I magnetised myself."

It is a remarkable fact that there are actors moderately endowed with mind and soul, who, once upon the stage,

compel their hearers both to weep and to think. "Why," asks M. Legouvé, "is this? It is because their voice is intelligent for them. Condemn them to silence, and they would fall back into their natural nothingness. It seems as if there were a little sleeping fairy in their throat, who wakes as soon as they speak, and, touching them with his wand, kindles in them unknown powers. The voice is an invisible actor concealed in the actor, a mysterious reader concealed in the reader. . . . and which serves as blower to both."

The voice being thus the speaker's chief instrument, it is hardly possible for him to take too much pains with its cultivation. It should be clear, distinct, and full; neither squeaking nor harsh, neither a whistle nor a growl, and requiring no push by the will; but capable, easily and naturally, of all the inflections and modulations, from a forte to a pianissimo, which suit the different sentiments it may be required to express. It needs, therefore, a systematic and scientific drill, as truly as do the muscles of the athlete who would excel in physical exercises. Its quality depends, of course, primarily upon the formation of the chest, the throat, and the mouth; but, though art can do nothing to change the structure of these organs, it can do much to facilitate and strengthen their movements in all that regards breathing, the emission of sound, and pronunciation. Labour strengthens weak voices, renders hard ones flexible, softens harsh ones,—acts, in short upon the speaker's voice as the practice of the art of song does upon that of the singer. By dint of painstaking a speaker, like a singer, may acquire notes which he lacks. The famous vocalist, Madame Malibran, in singing one day the rondo in the Opera of La Sonnambula, ended with a very high trill upon the *ré*, after having begun with the low *ré*. She had embraced three octaves in her vocalism. After the concert, a friend expressed his admiration of the trill: "Oh!" was the reply, "I have sought for it long enough. For three months I have

been running after it. I have pursued it everywhere,—while arranging my hair! while dressing! and I found it one morning in the bottom of my shoes, as I was putting them on!"

The example of Kean, the actor, who had by nature a notably feeble voice, shows how much may be accomplished by careful vocal training and cultivation. Talma bestowed incredible pains upon his voice. When young he stammered, his articulation was indistinct, he was quickly fatigued, and his tones were heavy and sepulchral; but so completely did he overcome these defects, that no one who heard him in the maturity of his power suspected their former existence. When Mr. Walsh, the American consul at Paris, heard him utter the words, "The iron reign of the people," he was astonished at their effect. Every word seemed a link in a chain-bolt, it was so hard, and solid, and round. Dr. Porter, of Andover, the author of an excellent work on Elocution, testifies that even in middle life he went to work and broke up "a stiff and clumsy pair of jaws;" and others declare that "from an effective monotony he passed to a range and flexibility of tone adequate to the highest purposes of the orator." Demosthenes, we know, was unwearied in his efforts to overcome the defects in his organs of speech. He had a weak voice, he stammered, he could not pronounce the first letter of the word which denotes his own profession, the *r* of Rhetor,—a letter which sticks in the throat of many Englishmen and Americans. To remedy these defects, he practised speaking with pebbles in his mouth, ran up-hill as he recited, and declaimed on the sea-shore amid the noise of waves and storms. All the ancient orators, indeed, whether because they had to speak to the multitude, whose senses must be struck, and on whom power and brilliancy of voice have a great effect, or, because they bestowed far more care on all the branches of the oratorical art, attached far greater importance to vocal culture than modern speakers. Quintilian

contemptuously dismisses those elocutionists who advocate the exclusive use of a simple conversational mode of speaking by saying: "It was not assuredly in a straightforward tone of voice that Demosthenes swore by the defenders of Marathon and Platæa and Salamis, nor was it in the monotonous strain of daily talk that Æschines bewailed the fate of Thebes."

M. Legouvé tells an amusing story of the way in which an actor of his acquaintance conquered the difficult letter *r*. "He was young, he had already some talent as an actor, and he was engaged in two pursuits, unequally dear to him, but equally difficult: he was labouring at the same time to conquer the rolling *r*, and the hand of a young girl with whom he was desperately smitten. Six months of toil had been rewarded with no more success in the one case than in the other. The *r* was obstinate in remaining in his throat, and the lady in remaining single. Finally, one day, or rather one evening, after an hour of supplications and of tender protestations, he touches the rebellious heart; the lady says yes! Drunk with joy, he hurriedly descends the staircase, and, in passing the porter's lodge, he hurls at him a sonorous and triumphant '*Cordon, s'il vous plait!*' ('Open, if you please!') The /*r* of *cordon* has a pure and vibrating sound, like an Italian *r!* The fear seizes him that perhaps it is but a happy accident. He repeats it; the same success! He can no longer doubt it; the rolling *r* is his! And to whom does he owe it? To her whom he adores. It is the intoxication of the happy passion which has wrought this miracle! And see,—he returns home, repeating all along the way, for he is always afraid of losing his conquest: '*Cordon, s'il vous plait! Cordon, s'il vous plait! Cordon, s'il vous plait!*' Suddenly a new incident occurs; as he turns a street corner, there leaps forth from under his feet,—from a hole,—an enormous rat! A rat! Another *r!* He adds it to the other; he joins them together: he shouts them together: '*Un rat!* (a rat) *Cordon! Cordon!*

Un gros rat! (a great rat) *Cordon! un gros rat! un gros rat! un gros rat!* And the *r*'s roll, and the street resounds with them. He returns home triumphant. He has vanquished the two rebels. He is loved, and he vibrates! Let us entitle this chapter: Of the Influence of Love on Articulation."

The necessity of careful attention to the cultivation of the voice, even by those who care only for rhetorical effects, is strikingly shown by its connection with style. It has been justly said that a tenor song, though you transpose it a fifth lower, will not suit a bass singer; and so the style of speaking which may be very effective for a man with a shrill, keen voice, may be absolutely grotesque if attempted by a man whose voice is rich and deep and full. You cannot play on the flute a piece of music written for the bass viol. Again, a man who speaks always in a feeble, low voice,—so feeble and low that "each one of his sentences seems like a poor, scared mouse running for its hole,"—will come at last to write as feebly as he speaks. "Observation," says Professor H. N. Day, "abundantly shows how a naturally imaginative and highly impassioned style may be gradually changed into one that is dry and tame by the continual influence of the conviction that we are not able appropriately to deliver strongly impassioned discourse. A conscious power and skill to express with effect the most highly-wrought discourse will, on the other hand, ever be stimulating to the production of it." There are instances, undoubtedly, of weak-lunged speakers, who, owing to a hereditary feebleness of constitution, can never, by any amount of vocal culture, attain to great vocal power. The example of Cotta, however, as he is described by Cicero, shows that such need not despair of success in oratory: "As he very prudently avoided every forcible exertion of his voice, on account of the weakness of his lungs, so his language was equally adapted to the delicacy of his constitution. Though he was scarcely able, and there-

fore never attempted, to force the passions of his judges by a strong and spirited delivery, yet he managed them so artfully that the gentle emotions he raised in them answered the same purpose and produced the same effect as the violent ones which were excited by Sulpicius."

The defects of a feeble or husky voice may be redeemed, to a great extent, by distinct articulation. The part which this quality plays in good oratory, as well as in good reading and acting, is immense. Clearness, energy, passion, vehemence, all depend more or less upon articulation. There have been actors of the first order who have had voices as feeble as a mouse's. Monvel, the famous French actor, had scarcely any voice; he had not even teeth! And yet, according to high authority, not only did his hearers never lose one of his words, but no artist had ever more pathos or fascination. The secret of his success was his exquisite articulation. "The most admirable reader," says M. Legouvé, "I ever knew, was M. Andrieux. Yet his voice was more than weak; it was faint, husky, hoarse. . . . How did he triumph over so many defects? By articulation. It was said that he made himself understood by dint of making himself heard." The same writer adds that there are readers, orator, and actors, to whom the very richness of their voices is an inconvenience. As they know not how to articulate, the sound devours the word. The vowels devour the consonants. Such persons make so much noise in reading and speaking that nobody understands them.

It is remarkable that, dependent as we are upon the organs of speech for the communication of our ideas and feelings, we know so little of the secret of the working of these organs. Anatomists have dissected and laid bare all the details of their complex and wondrous structure,—they have shown the formation of the larynx, with its muscles, cartilages, membranes, and tracery, by which the vocal sounds are modu-

lated,—but of the connection of these organs with the effect produced, they have told us almost nothing. The researches of the subtlest science are here unavailing. We know that every voice has its natural bell-tone, which makes it a bass voice, a tenor, or a soprano, and that between these are various intermediate gradations; and there our knowledge ends. Of all these, the middle voice or tenor, as Bautain observes, is the most favourable for speaking, both because it maintains itself the best, and, when well articulated, reaches the farthest. The upper voice is undesirable because it continually tends to a scream. Only the highest intellectual gifts, with great personal magnetism and other compensations, can atone for this blemish. A bass voice is with difficulty pitched high, and continually tends downward. Grave and majestic at the outset, it soon grows heavy and monotonous; it has magnificent chords, but, if long listened to, produces often the effect of a drone, and soon tires and lulls to sleep by the medley of commingling sounds. If coarse and violent, it deafens and stuns the ear; and when thundering in a vast building in which echoes exist, the billows of sound, reverberating from every side, blend together, should the orator be speaking fast, and the result is a deafening confusion and an acoustic chaos.

The middle voice, for the very reason that it is in the middle of the scale, has the largest resources for inflection, since it can rise or sink with greater ease than the other tones, and thus allow greater play to expression. Possessing a greater variety of intonations than the other voices, it is less liable to monotony, and holds the attention of the hearer, who is so prone to doze. But whatever be the tone of the voice, the most desirable quality it can possess for the purposes of the public speaker, is to be *sympathetic*. The great merit of this voice is, that not only, by its siren tones, does it propitiate and win the hearer in advance, but it exerts

a steady fascination, a magnetic influence, which draws and fastens his attention to the end, as if by some magic spell. "It is a secret virtue which is in speech, and which penetrates at once, or little by little, through the ear to the heart of those who listen, charms them, and holds them beneath the charm, to such a degree that they are disposed, not only to listen, but even to admit what is said, and to receive it with confidence. It is a voice which inspires an affection for him who speaks, and puts you instinctively on his side, so that his words find an echo in the mind, repeating there what he says, and reproducing it easily in the understanding and heart."

It is not our business in this work to point out the various faults of speakers in the management of the voice, such as lack of proper modulation, indistinct articulation, speaking too slowly or too rapidly, or in a constant monotone. All this belongs to a professional treatise. But there is one fault so common, especially with young speakers, that we cannot forbear noticing it. The great majority, confounding loudness with force, speak in too high a key. Like Æschines, as accused by Demosthenes, when the former, at the close of his oration on the crown, bawled and mouthed, they seem to consider eloquence as an affair of the *lungs*. It is a great mistake to suppose that he who speaks in the loudest tones can be heard the farthest or the most easily. Gardiner, in his "Music of Nature," notes a curious fact in the history of sound. He says:—"The loudest notes always perish on the spot where they are produced, whereas musical notes will be heard at a great distance. Thus, if we approach within a mile or two of a town or village in which a fair is held, we may hear very faintly the clamour of the multitude, but more distinctly the organs, and other musical instruments which are played for their amusement. If a Cremona violin, a real Amati, be played by the side of a modern fiddle, the latter

will sound much louder than the former; but the sweet, brilliant tone of the Amati will be heard at a distance the other cannot reach. Dr. Young, on the authority of Durham, states that at Gibraltar the human voice may be heard at a greater distance than that of any other animal; thus, when the cottager in the woods, or the open plain, wishes to call her husband, who is working at a distance, she does not shout, but pitches her voice to a musical key, which she knows from habit, and by that means reaches his ear. The loudest roar of the largest lion could not penetrate so far."

The same writer states that when Paganini played in England, the connoisseurs did not seek the nearest seats, but preferred more retired places, where his exquisite instrumentation overrode the storm of the orchestra.

Besides the difficulty of being heard distinctly, there are other objections to using the high notes, except rarely, in speaking. Not only do they become shrill and harsh by excessive use, but the very thought of the speaker may be affected by it. The celebrated French advocate, M. Berryer, attributes the loss of an excellent law-case to his having begun his pleading, unconsciously, on too high a key. The fatigue of his larynx communicated itself speedily to his temples; from the temples it passed to the brain; his mind refused to act with vigour, because its organ was overstrained; his thoughts became confused; and the great lawyer lost the full command of his intellectual faculties, and with it of his case, because he had not thought of coming down from the perch to which his voice had climbed at the beginning of his speech.

Some years ago a writer in a public journal, in speaking of an address read by Dr. Orville Dewey, described his impressions thus: "And such reading! quiet and unpretentious, but with such appropriate feeling and intense expressiveness! I was not prepared for such a really powerful

essay with so little show of power. I better understand the mightiness of the still small voice, and recognise an oratory in condensed feeling and subdued tones, greater than the most showy rhetoric and the stormiest bluster."

What a pity it is that we have so few such readers in our pulpits! The besetting sin of our preaching to-day is that it is declamatory. In nine cases out of ten it needs to be more conversational. If you want to speak well, said Brougham to a young Etonian, you must first learn to talk well. Not that the heights of eloquence can be reached by this style, or that there are not cases where the preacher must lighten and thunder as well as plead. There are themes which call for denunciation and indignant invective, and then only the sharp and ringing tones that belong to the upper register will do. Again, a voice of mediocre power may captivate senates, but only a mighty voice can move a multitude. Of what use would the flute-like voice of Everett have been to O'Connell in his "hill-side stormings?" Beecher has well said that "there are cases in which by a single explosive tone a man will drive home a thought as a hammer drives a nail." But bursts of oratory are necessarily the exception, not the rule, in a sermon; moreover, few have the genius for them; and therefore we believe that there would be a great gain of power, if *ordinarily* the preacher would simply *talk* to his hearers as a man talks to his friend. At any rate, when he does pitch his voice on a high key, he should have a better reason for so doing than old Dr. Beecher had on a certain Sunday. Coming home from church, he said to his son Henry, who tells the anecdote: "It seems to me I never made a worse sermon than I did this morning." "Why, father," said Henry, "I never heard you preach so loud in all my life." "That is the way," said the Doctor; "I always holloa when I haven't anything to say!"

It has been justly said by some writer, that almost every

one is surprised on first hearing Wendell Phillips. You are looking for a man who is all art, all thunder. Lo! a quiet man glides on to the platform, and begins talking in a simple, easy, conversational way; presently he makes you smile at some happy turn, then he startles you by a rapier-like thrust, then he electrifies you by a grand outburst of feeling. "You listen, believe, applaud. And that is Wendell Phillips. That is also oratory,—to produce the greatest effect by the quietest means." We cannot all be Phillipses: but we can all copy his naturalness, earnestness, and simplicity; and what a gain even that would be to the great majority of preachers! Their main fault is not that they cannot read Greek and Hebrew, but that they cannot read English. As the best music, badly played, makes wretched melody, so false or spiritless elocution degrades the finest composition to a level with the worst. The celebrated Dr. Laurence, the associate of Burke and Fox, spoke so badly, in such an unvarying monotone, as completely to neutralise the effect which his thought and learning were fitted to produce. Fox said that a man should listen, if possible, to a speech of the Doctor's, and then speak it over again himself; it must, he thought, succeed infallibly, for it was sure to be admirable of itself, and of being new to the audience. While such are the effects of a languid, drawling delivery, who, on the other hand, does not know the sorcery that lies in a skilful utterance, which properly distributes the lights and shadows of a musical intonation? By sonorous depth and melodious cadences,—by a distinct articulation, which chisels and engraves the thoughts,—even the most trivial sentiments may be invested with a force and fascination almost irresistible. As a good singer cares little for the words of a song, knowing that he can make any words glorious, so the orator can infuse power and pathos into the tamest language. There is hardly any person familiar with pulpit eloquence who does not know that some of the pro-

foundest and most scholarly discourses,—discourses which, when read, seem full of concentrated thought and vigorous expression,—have fallen almost powerless from the lips of their authors, while a single verse of Scripture, or a line from an old and familiar hymn, coming from the lips of another man, has acted like an electric shock, "tearing and shattering the heart," to use De Quincey's figure, "with volleying discharges, peal after peal."

Again, it is a common error to suppose that special attention to elocution leads to affectation and mannerism. The very reverse is the fact. Affectation is the result of untaught efforts at a late age to rid one's self of the vulgarisms, provincialisms, slovenliness, indistinctness, and other faults of schoolboy days. The reason why so many persons who study elocution fail to profit by it, is that they begin too late. The rustic who late in life apes the gentleman, is sure to be affected; not so with him who is "to the manner born." Let all persons who are to be public speakers be trained early and scientifically in the management of their voices, as an essential part of their education,—let them be drilled and practised for years, till they have acquired the last great art, that of concealing art,—and we shall no longer listen to discourses which, like Milton's infernal gates, grate on our ears "harsh thunder," or which, like Shelley's waves on the sea-shore, breathe over the slumbering brain a dull monotony, but to a pleasing, forcible, and effective delivery, "musical as is Apollo's lute;" and "sore throats," the result of unnatural tones and straining, will disappear from the catalogue of clerical ills.

Of all the qualifications of the orator which we have named, none is more essential than energy,—physical and intellectual FORCE. Cicero sums up the whole art of speaking: to speak to the purpose, to speak clearly and distinctly, and to speak gracefully. To-day it is important also to speak with force.

This is especially requisite to-day, because the age itself is full of force, and therefore impatient of feebleness. By force we mean the energy (etymologically, the inward-workingness) with which the speaker employs his various abilities to make us see and feel that which he would impress upon our minds. It is not a single faculty, but the whole strength of his soul bearing upon ours. It was this quality to which Demosthenes must have referred in his reiterated "action, action, action," on which he laid such stress. A speech may be packed full of thought, tersely and felicitously expressed; its facts may be apt, its style elegant, and its logic without a flaw; and yet if it lack fire and spirit, or if it be tamely delivered, it will make but a weak impression. On the other hand, a production which is intellectually far inferior to it,—which is full of bad rhetoric and worse logic,—which is one-sided in its views, and made up of the most hackneyed material,—will make a powerful impression for the hour (which is commonly the end of speaking), if the orator is energetic, and infuses that energy into his performance. As in political administration errors and even gross blunders are pardoned, if the main end is attained, so a speech may be full of faults, and yet be successful, if it be full of energy.

Force is partly a physical product, and partly mental; it is the life of oratory, which gives it breath, and fire, and power. It is the electrical element, that which smites, penetrates, and thrills. While listening to a speaker who has this property of eloquence, "our minds seem to be pricked as with needles, and pierced as with javelins." It does not necessarily imply vehemence. There may be energy, as we shall presently show, in suppressed feeling, in deep pathos, in simple description, nay, even in silence itself. There is often an appearance of energy where there is no reality,—a tug and strain to be forcible, without calm inward power. "The aspiration is infinite, but the performance is

infinitesimal." In the highest examples of energy, there is no appearance of exertion; we see only power "half-leaning on its own right arm," the Athlete conquering without a visible strain or contortion. In Guido's picture of St. Michael piercing the dragon, while the gnarled muscles of the arm and hand attest the utmost strain of the strength, the countenance remains placid and serene.

Demosthenes, if we may judge by an oft-quoted saying of an enemy, must have had an almost superhuman force. "What," exclaimed Æschines to the Rhodians, when they applauded the recital of the speech which caused his banishment,—"what if you had heard the *monster* himself?" Lord Chatham's oratory was strikingly characterised by force. A large part of his success was due to his imperial positiveness of character. Possessing a vigorous, acute, and comprehensive intellect, he saw at a glance what most men discover by laborious processes of reasoning, and flashed his thoughts upon other minds with the vividness, rapidity, and abruptness with which they arose in his own. Scorning the slow, formal methods of the logician, he crushed together proof and statement in the same sentence, and reached his conclusions at a single bound. As John Foster said, "He struck on the results of reasoning as a cannon-shot strikes the mark, without your seeing its course through the air." Lord Brougham is a yet more signal example of this quality in oratory, because he owes his victories almost to it alone. Possessing little personal magnetism,—at least, of the kind that fascinates and charms; careless in his statements, inaccurate in his quotations, lame in his logic, and intensely partisan in his views; displaying little literary skill in the composition of his speeches, which are often involved and sometimes lumbering in style, and almost always devoid of elegance or polish; addicted to exaggeration and a kind of hyperbolical iteration in which there is sometimes "more

potter than power;" he is yet, in spite of these faults, one of the most potent and successful orators of the century, simply because of his intense, gladiator-like energy. All his discourses throb and palpitate with a robust life.

Even Chatham and Brougham were, if possible, surpassed in force,—at least, in the union of physical and intellectual energy,—by the master-spirit of the French Revolution. The orator of all the ages most remarkable for force was Mirabeau. It seemed, at times, as if the iron chain of his argument were fastened to an electric battery, every link of which gave you a shock. William Wirt tells us that President Jefferson, who heard Mirabeau while minister to France, spoke of him as uniting two distinct and perfect characters in himself, whenever he pleased,—the mere logician, with a mind apparently as desolate and sterile as the sands of Arabia, but reasoning at such times with an *Herculean force* which nothing could resist; and, at other times, bursting forth with a flood of eloquence more sublime than Milton ever imputed to the seraphim and cherubim, and bearing all before him. The same force characterised the speaking of Chief Justice Marshall, when at the bar. No matter what the question; though ten times more knotty than "the gnarled oak," he penetrated at once to its core,—to the point on which the controversy depended; and seizing the attention with irresistible energy, he never permitted it to elude his grasp, until he had forced his convictions on his hearers.

It is to his energy that the so-called *natural* orator owes his power over his fellow-men. It is in his strength and intensity of character,—in his determined will, his triumphant self-assertion, his positiveness and overbearingness,—that lurks his magic. By the sheer force of enthusiasm and animal passion,—by his glowing periods and "sentences of a venturous edge,"—he rouses audiences to a pitch of excitement to which the polished and dainty rhetorician seeks to uplift

them in vain. Some one has said that eloquence is a sort of majesty, a species of kingly power; and men acknowledge the mastery of those only who have in their natures a strong element of self-assertion. The very authority, and even audacity with which they affirm a thing, makes half the world believe it true. In like manner, the principal, if not the sole cause of the success of the radical orator of the present day, is his force. "He is a man of one lone idea, and if this happens to be a great and fundamental one, as it sometimes does, it is apprehended upon one of its sides only. As a consequence, he is an intense man, a forcible man. His utterances penetrate. It is true that there are among this class some of less earnest spirit, and less energetic temper; amateur reformers, who wish to make an impression upon the public mind from motives of mere vanity. Such men are exceedingly feeble, and soon desist from their undertaking. For while the common mind is ever ready, too ready, to listen to a really earnest and forcible man, even though his force proceeds from a wrong source, and sets in an altogether wrong direction, it yet loathes a lukewarm earnestness, a counterfeited enthusiasm. One of the most telling characters, in one of the most brilliant English comedies, is Forcible Feeble. Take away from the man who goes now by the name of reformer,—the half-educated man who sees the truth but not the *whole* truth,—take away from him his force, and you take away his muscular system. He instantaneously collapses into a flabby pulp."

It was well observed some years ago, by an American orator who had closely studied his art, that the florid and Asiatic style of eloquence is not the taste of the age. The strong, and even the rugged and the abrupt, he asserted, are far more successful. "Bold propositions, boldly and briefly expressed,—pithy sentences,—nervous common sense,—strong phrases,—both in language and conception,—well

compacted periods,—sudden and strong masses of light,—an apt adage in English or Latin,—a keen sarcasm,—a merciless personality,—a mortal thrust,—these are the beauties and deformities that now make a speaker the most interesting. "In your arguments at the bar," he says again, addressing a young friend, "*let argument strongly predominate.* Sacrifice your flowers, and let your columns be Doric, rather than Composite,—the better medium is Ionic. Avoid, as you would the gates of death, the reputation of floridity. Small though your body, let the march of your mind be the stride of a seven-leagued giant."

Energy is greatly increased by *interrogation.* A hearer who is listless while assertions only are made, will often prick up his ears when he is appealed to by a question. Cicero begins his first oration against Catiline in this way, and Demosthenes employs this figure with great effect in his Philippics, and in the speech on the Crown: "Will you continue to go about to each other and ask, What's the news? Can anything be more new than that a man from Macedonia should subjugate Greece? Is Philip dead? No, indeed; but he is ill. What matters it to you?—to you, who, if he were to come to grief, would quickly get yourselves another Philip?" Chatham, in one of his superb outbursts, demands, "Who is the man that . . . has dared to authorise and associate to our arms the tomahawk and scalping-knife of the savage?" Cicero tells us that the very enemies of Gracchus could not help weeping, when he delivered this passage: "Whither shall such a miserable wretch as I betake myself? Whither shall I turn? To the Capitol? But that swims with my brother's blood. Shall I go to my own house? Would I not there see my mother, miserable, wailing, and degraded?"

Exclamation and apostrophe, which suppose great intensity of emotion, add very much to energy. To be effective, the

apostrophe should be brief, and, apparently, from the impulse of the moment; else, in the one case, there will be no illusion, or, in the other, it will quickly vanish. There is hardly any other figure which requires so much skill to manage it, or in which failure makes a speaker so ridiculous. Among the most celebrated oratorical apostrophes may be mentioned that of Demosthenes to the manes of the heroes who fell at Marathon, that of Æschines to Thebes, and that of Cicero in his oration against Verres, in which he describes the crucifixion of a Roman citizen. There are also striking examples of apostrophe raised to vision in the peroration of Robert Hall's Sermon on the Threatened Invasion of 1803, and in the famous passage in Erskine's defence of Stockdale, in which he introduces the Indian Chief.

Gesture is almost essential to energetic speaking; we say almost, for we remember that some speakers have made hardly a gesture, and yet have delivered themselves with the greatest excitement and passion, and produced a deep and abiding impression. The history of eloquence shows that gesticulation is a most powerful exponent of emotion, and may add almost incredible force to the utterance of the tongue. Who that has seen how Gavazzi moved English audiences by his looks and gestures alone can be ignorant of the increased significance which may be given to words by a glance of the eye, a motion, or a wave of the hand? Some fifty years ago there was an eloquent Lutheran clergyman in Baltimore whose action was so impressive, that a highly cultivated Massachusetts clergyman who heard him preach, but who was wholly ignorant of the German language in which he spoke, was moved to tears. The hearer felt confident that the discourse was upon the Prodigal Son, and, upon leaving the church, was told that such was the fact. Daniel Webster was usually parsimonious of gestures, but those which he chose to make were often signally apt and telling. In speak-

ing of the Buffalo platform in 1848, he said: "It is so rickety that it will hardly bear the fox-like tread of Mr. Van Buren." As he said "fox-like tread," he held out the palm of his left hand, and with the other played his fingers along his extended arm down to the hand, with a soft running motion, as if to represent the kitten-like advance of the foxy advocate upon his rickety platform. A shout of laughter testified to the aptness of this sign-teaching.

The speaker who feels his subject deeply will feel it in his very finger-tips. Even the foot, in giving expression to violent emotion, or in giving attitude and dignity to the figure, is no mean auxiliary to the other organs. Among the ancients the *supplosio pedis*, or stamping of the foot, was one of the commonest and most moderate gestures. Quintilian even asserts that gesture is commonly more expressive than the voice. He adds that, without the hands, delivery would be maimed and feeble. Other parts of the body aid the speaker, but the hands themselves speak: "Do we not with them ask, promise, call, threaten, detest, fear, interrogate, deny? Do we not with them express joy, sorrow, doubt, penitence, moderation, abundance, number, time? And, amidst the great diversity of tongues, in all races and nations, is not this language common to all men?"

Profound feeling or violent passion is rarely satisfied with any expression of itself that is possible in mere words; it feels itself to be "cribbed and confined" till it can find an outlet in some apt bodily act or emotion. Such acts are even more truly than words the language of nature, though they may not be as significant. It is for this reason that oratory, in its power of expression, is so superior to all the other arts. Addressing themselves as they do exclusively to one or the other of "the two art-senses,"—poetry and music to the ear, painting and sculpture to the eye, only,—they must yield the palm to oratory, which addresses itself at once

both to the ear and to the eye, and has thus a twofold means of impression. Not only is gesture more expressive, in many cases, than words, but it is also more rapid and sudden in its effects than the aptest language can be. It has been truly said that the sidelong glance, the drooping lid, the expanded nostril, the curving lip, are more instantaneously eloquent than any mere expression of disdain; and the starting eyeball and open mouth tell more of terror than the most abject words. M. Charma tells an anecdote of the actor Talma, that, disgusted at the disproportion of praise which was attributed to the words of the poets, by which he produced in the theatre such thrilling effects, he one day, in the midst of a gay circle of friends, suddenly retreated a step, passed his hand over his forehead, and gave to his voice and figure the expression of the profoundest despair. The assembly grew silent, pale, and shuddering, as though Œdipus had appeared among them, when, as by a lightning-flash, his parricide was revealed to him, or as though the avenging Furies had suddenly startled them with their gleaming torches. Yet the words which the actor spoke with that aspect of consternation and voice of anguish formed but the fragment of a nursery song, and the effects of action triumphed over those produced by words.

Of course, gesticulation may be overdone, like emphasis, in which case it only enfeebles the thought. To be effective, it should be prompt and instinctive, now easy and quiet, now strong and animated, but always graceful and natural. A single gesture in a passage, if it be apt and telling, will often produce more effect than a dozen equally significant. Too little gesture is as unnatural as too much. It is strange that the happy medium is so rarely observed, considering that every child is an illustration of its proper use, and that we may see examples of it in almost every man that talks to his neighbour in the street. There are few speakers who do not

impair the effect of their gesticulation by some excess or mannerism. One orator gesticulates with his left hand chiefly; another keeps his elbows pinioned to his sides; another enforces his arguments by pommelling the desk or table at frequent intervals; another uses his hands "as if he had claws, pawing with them;" another cannot utter a sentence without sawing himself backward and forward, like the mast of a yacht at anchor; another folds his arms over his chest, *à la* Pitt; another has a trick of rising often on tiptoe, as if he had been accustomed to addressing his audience over a high wall; another paces the platform to and fro, like a wild beast in a cage; and another, despairing, after many attempts, of suiting the action to the word, thrusts the means of action, his hands, into his breeches pockets. It has been observed that young speakers are especially apt to overdo in gesture, reminding one, by the constant motion of their arms, of the flapping of a pair of wings, as if they were intent upon "flying all abroad."

Expression of countenance is essential to energy. Not only the hands, but the eyes, the lips, even the nostrils should speak, for this is the universal language of nature, which needs no dictionary or interpreter. There is a tradition that the famous conspiracy of the Sicilian vespers was organised wholly by facial signs, not even the hands being employed. The eye is so expressive that it is said that gamblers rely upon the study of it, to discover the state of an opponent's game, more than upon any other means. No rules can be laid down upon this subject; it is enough to say that the facial expressions should correspond to the sentiments uttered, and this, where there is deep feeling, may safely be left to nature.

Energy depends much upon *the choice and number of words.* Cicero, who loved a copious style, tells us that he never heard of a Lacedæmonian orator; and it is certain that a suc-

cession of epigrammatic sayings, or aphorisms, would be a very poor speech. When an orator is full of his subject, and his mind is swelling with the thoughts, and his soul with the feelings which his theme inspires, until there is a fountain-head of ideas pressing at his lips for utterance, he will not express himself in a series of curt sentences, however pithy or pointed. If there is a tide in his soul, there will be a flow in his eloquence, and he will not dam it up in pools by too frequent periods. Nevertheless, it is a rule, as Southey says, that it is with words as with sunbeams; the more they are condensed the deeper they burn. Sir Joshua Reynolds says that Titian knew how to place upon the canvas the image and character of any object he attempted, by a few strokes of the pencil, and that he thus produced a truer representation than any of his predecessors who finished every hair. So the great orators, Chatham, Erskine, Henry, wrought. They grouped instead of analysing, and produced, by a few master-touches, effects which pre-Raphaelite minuteness and laborious finish would have marred. This suggestive speaking, which, instead of exhausting subjects and explaining everything to death, leaves much to the imagination, is demanded now even more imperiously than in the days of Chatham. Men think and act quickly, with all their faculties on the alert; and the long-winded speeches and discourses, with endless divisions and subdivisions, to which men listened patiently two centuries ago, would now be regarded as utterly intolerable. Let the young speaker, then, prune away all redundant words, all parasitical epithets, using only those that double and triple the force of the substantive. Be chary of words and phrases; economise them as a miser does his gold. "The people," says a French writer, "affect those thoughts that are formulated in a single word. They like such expressions as the following,—*vive!* . . . *à bas!* . . . *mort!* . . . *vengeance!* . . . *liberté!* . . . *justice!* The harangues of

Napoleon lasted only a few minutes, yet they electrified whole armies. The speech at Bordeaux did not exceed a quarter of an hour, and yet it resounded throughout the world."

George W. Bethune, an eloquent preacher, has remarked that energy should be *accrescent*. Nothing seizes the attention of an audience better than a gentle beginning. Of course, a speaker should be in earnest from the very start, his looks, action, bearing, and tones of voice all indicating that he has something important to communicate, and that he is anxious to communicate it. Still, "his energy should gradually rise in thought, language and manner. His hearers are not prepared to sympathise with him at once; and, then, his vehemence appears impertinent. It is far better to win their attention by a gentler method; nay, even to lull them, husbanding all our resources of power until their attention is fairly enchained, and then to sweep them on with us, never suffering their interest to flag. Some have the talent of taking an audience by storm, but it is very difficult to keep up the excitement, and, in a failure to do so, the thoughts that follow are made to seem weaker than they really are, by the contrast. There should be a continual ascent to the close, that close being the most impressive of all. . . . Be sure that the final sentence leaves every soul vibrating like a swept harp." The famous passage on Universal Emancipation in Curran's defence of Rowan is a fine specimen of climacteric energy. As sentence follows after sentence, each heightens and deepens the effect, till the passage closes with the magnificent climax at the end, like the swell and crash of an orchestra. Erskine was peculiarly happy in thus aggravating and intensifying the force of his appeals. As we read his jury addresses, we see that he never for a moment dissipates or scatters his force, but compels rill after rill, stream after stream, of fact and argument, to flow

together, "each small, perhaps, in itself, but all contributing to swell the mighty flood that bursts upon us in the cataract of his conclusion." It is said of an eloquent and successful American preacher that as he was about to close his discourse, there was no such visible gathering up of his forces as pointed to a climax, but the result of all he had said was rolled and hammered into a few short sentences, shot with the crack and directness of a rifle,—and the sermon was ended. So cleverly was the work done, that the hearer went away with hardly a thought of the preacher or his performance, but with a divine thought lodged in his mind, which he would carry with him to his grave.

CHAPTER IV.

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE ORATOR (*continued*).

Among the faculties demanded by the orator, few are more essential to high success than a lively IMAGINATION. He needs this not only that he may be able to fix his plan well in his mind and retain it there, but in order that he may have clear, distinct, and vivid conceptions of that which he wishes to say, and may be able to put both his premeditated thought and any new thought that occurs to him instantly into language at the first stroke. It must not be supposed that the tropes and illustrations which the imagination supplies are purely ornamental. The difference between languid speaking and vivid oratory depends largely upon the quality of the speaker's imagination. The plumage of the eagle supports it in its flight. It is not by naked, bold statements of fact, but by pictures that make them *see* the facts, that assemblies are moved. Put an argument into concrete shape,—into a lively image, or into "some hard phrase, round and solid as a ball, which men can see and handle and carry home,"—and your cause is half won. No train of thought is too deep, too subtle, or too grand, for a popular audience, if the thought is rightly presented to them. It should be conveyed in anecdote, or sparkling truism, or telling illustration, or stinging epithet,—never in a logical, abstract shape.

Aristotle has well said that "the *metaphor* is the orator's figure, the simile is the poet's." He further observes that mere names carry to the mind of the hearer their specific meaning, and there they end; but metaphors do more than this, for they awaken new thoughts. He might have added that metaphors charm the fancy, and are, therefore, a great help to the memory. They deepen the impression of the

sentiments, and fix them in the affections. The superiority, in value, of the metaphor to the simile, for the speaker's uses, is that it is swift and glancing, flashing its light instantaneously, without ever for a moment impeding the flow of the thought. Unlike the thoughts, the tropes and figures of the orator are rarely elaborated, but drop spontaneously from his tongue in moments of inspiration. He *thinks* in metaphor. He can no more invent them than he can, by taking thought, add a cubit to his stature. Of all the orators of ancient or modern times, Burke was the greatest master of this figure, which he employs sometimes to excess. Probably no prose style ever went so near to the verge of poetry without going over, as his; "it may be said," says Hazlitt, "to pass yawning gulfs 'on the unsteadfast footing of a spear;' still it has an actual resting-place and tangible support under it,—it is not suspended on nothing. It differs from poetry, as I conceive, like the chamois from the eagle: it climbs to an almost equal height, touches upon a cloud, overlooks a precipice, is picturesque, sublime,—but all the while, instead of soaring through the air, it stands upon a rocky cliff, clambers up by abrupt and intricate ways, and browses on the roughest bark or crops the tender flower." What can be grander than the comparison of the British constitution to "the proud keep of Windsor, rising in the majesty of proportion, and girt with the double belt of its kindred and coeval powers," etc.?—what more unique or felicitous than the Abbe Sièyes's far-famed "pigeon-holes," or the picture of the Duke of Bedford as "the Leviathan, tumbling about his unwieldy bulk in the ocean of the royal bounty?"—or what bolder and more striking than the application of Milton's description of Sin to the half-bright, half-terrible phenomena of the French Revolution, which was crowned, as it rose, with all the radiance of intellect, but closed in massacre and horror?

Curran was a great master of metaphor. The saying of Pericles that "metaphors are often lamps which light nothing, and show only the nakedness of the walls against which they are hung," had no application to him. Often his reasonings were so couched in figures, that if you took away the one you destroyed the other. Sometimes he seemed for a moment to soar away from his theme in flights of imagination; but, however high he flew, he always came back to it with additional force, and the images he employed not only quickened attention, but lent vividness to the ideas he wished to impress. With what force and splendour is the thought in the following passage, in his defence of Rowan, flashed upon the mind by the aptness of the illustration: "This (the origin and object of government) is a kind of subject which I feel overawed when I approach. There are certain fundamental principles which nothing but necessity should expose to public examination. They are pillars, the depth of whose foundation you cannot explore, without endangering their strength." How felicitous is the image used by Sheil, when, alluding to the spirit of liberty rising from the lower to the upper orders, he says: "At length they have learned to participate in the popular sentiment; the spirit by which the great body of the people is actuated has risen to the higher classes, and the fire which has so long lain in the lower region of society has burst at length from its frozen summits." Not inferior to this is the fine figure of Plunket: "Time is the great destroyer of evidence, but he is the great protector of titles. He comes with a scythe in one hand, to mow down the muniments of our possessions, while he holds an hour-glass with the other, from which he incessantly metes out the portions of duration which are to render the muniments no longer necessary." But none of these flowers of fancy, however dazzling or daring, surpass in beauty Daniel Webster's imagery, in the

famous tribute to the Revolutionary Fathers: "They went to war against a preamble .... On this question of principle, while actual suffering was as yet afar off, they raised their flag against a power, to which, for purposes of foreign conquest and subjugation, Rome, in the height of her glory, is not to be compared, ... a power which has dotted over the surface of the whole globe with her possessions and military posts; whose morning drum-beat, following the sun, and keeping company with the hours, circles the earth daily with one continuous and unbroken strain of the martial airs of England."

As nothing is more effective in oratory than imagery, so nothing is more dangerous when uncontrolled by good sense. Many an orator, in the very whirlwind of his eloquence, has convulsed his hearers with laughter by some incongruous metaphor that has dissipated every serious feeling,—"bringing down the house" in a way as unpleasant as unexpected. Curran, in speaking of Phillips's oratory, in which tropes of every form were mixed up profusely and in inextricable confusion, gave a pregnant warning to all speakers: "My dear Tom, it will never do for a man to turn painter merely on the strength of having a pot of colours by him, unless he knows how to lay them on." As the imagination works best in solitude and stillness, it is doubtful whether the din and tumult of the present age are not unfavourable to some of the higher forms of oratory. It has been said that no man can produce poetry at will; he must wait until from a brooding, half-idle idleness, it arises, like a gentle mist from a lake, delicately and of itself. So with the fine fancies, the exquisite imagery, of the great orator; only those who are withdrawn, during long seasons, into the brooding imagination, are favoured with them; and where, in this restless, hurried, and impatient age, are such to be found? Fortunately good taste does not demand that oratory should be profusely

decked with flowers. Rather should it be like the grave and gorgeous foliage of the resplendent American forest, full of richness and variety, deriving new beauty from the chill influences of a materialistic age, and admired less for its scattered hues and tints, than for the combined effect and splendour of the whole.

It is a truism to say that there can be no eloquence without deep FEELING. It is not enough for the orator to have the ordinary passions of our nature; he must be a magazine of sensibility, an electric battery, a Leyden jar charged to a plenum. No matter how rare or ample his intellectual gifts; unless he have an abnormal emotional system united with the mental,—a rare depth and fire of nature, a capability of being mightily moved so as to move mightily, an inner power of at once awakening and controlling emotion, so that he is able *agitatus cogitare*, and, even in moments of the most fiery passion, to maintain his mastery over the inner storm of being, whose forces give fervour and impetus to his eloquence,—he can never dominate his fellow men by his oratory. He may tickle the ears of his hearers; he may charm men by fine displays of imagination, of logic, and of rhetoric; but there will be no electric appeals, no fulminating bursts of passion, no melting pathos, no sudden and overwhelming improvisation in his speeches. The thoughts and feelings of a great writer or speaker reach our hearts because they issue from his. The bullets, according to the huntsman's superstition, are sure to hit the mark, if they have first been dipped in the huntsman's blood. The cold-blooded, phlegmatic speaker, therefore, whose words issue from a frame that has no more sympathy with them than has the case of a piano with the music of which it is the medium, can have no business on the platform. The man who can't put fire into his speeches should put his speeches into the fire. When a flabby-minded young

preacher, who had discoursed in old Dr. Emmons's pulpit, angling for a compliment, complained at dinner to the Doctor that "somehow he couldn't get into his subject,"—"Do you know the reason, sir?" was the caustic reply,—"it is because your subject never got into *you*." The orator who would gain and hold the ear of the people to-day, must not only conceive his subject clearly, and hold it firmly, but his whole soul must be charged and vitalised by it; then, instead of speaking, as Strafford said, "from the teeth outward," he will speak *from* the heart and *to* the heart; and, instead of shunning his lips, great thoughts will come to them as Goethe said that his best thoughts came, "like singing birds, the free children of God, crying, "'Here we are!'"

"Josh Billings," in describing his experience with a boil, said that at first he knew he had a *boil*, but that after two days he knew the boil had *him*. It is not enough that the speaker have a subject, however momentous, but the subject must have *him*, if he would storm the hearts of his hearers. Lord Erskine has well said that intellect alone, however exalted, without irritable sensibility, would be only like an immense magazine of powder, if there were no such element as fire in the natural world. "It is the heart which is the spring and fountain of all eloquence." Cicero tells us, in one of his letters, that in his early career the vehemence with which his intense interest in his themes led him to express himself, shattered his constitution; and he was obliged to spend two years in Greece, exercising in the gymnasium, before he could engage again in the struggles of the forum. Lord Chatham said that he did not dare to speak with a State secret lurking in his mind, for in the Sibylline frenzy of his oratory he knew not what he said. John Wesley once said to his brother Charles, who wished to draw him away from a mob, in which some coarse women were scolding each other in hot Billingsgate: "Stop, Charles, and learn how to

preach." "I go to hear Rowland Hill," said Sheridan, "because his ideas *come red-hot from the heart.*"

The reason why so many preachers are unsuccessful is because they do not feel what they preach. The first element of pulpit-power is a face-to-face knowledge of the truths to be driven home,—a vivid inward experience pouring itself out in living, breathing, palpitating words. Whitefield, in accounting for the feebleness of the generality of preachers, attributed it to their coldness. They were not flames, but icicles. "I am persuaded," said he, "that they talk of an unknown and unfelt Christ; many congregations are dead because dead men are preaching to them." Betterton, the actor, said that the dulness and coldness that empty the meeting-house would empty the playhouse, if the players spoke like the preachers; and he told the Lord Bishop of London that the reason why the clergy, speaking of things real, affect the people so little, while the players, speaking of things unreal, affect them so much, is because "the actors speak of things imaginary as though they were real; the preachers too often speak of things real as though they were imaginary." Nothing can be more true. To be eloquent, a man must be himself affected. He must be not only sincere, but deeply in earnest. The fire which he would kindle in other men's bosoms, must burn in his own heart. The magnetic force must saturate his own spirit before it will flow out upon those around him. No hypocritical expressions of feeling, however passionate in appearance, no simulated fervours, however clever the imitation, will work the magical effects of reality. The arguments which do not come from personal conviction, the words which come from no deeper source than the lips, will lack a certain indefinable but potent element which is absolutely essential to their highest effectiveness. It is not enough that a speaker utters profound or weighty truths; he must show by all possible forms

of expression,—by voice, looks, and gesture, that they are truths, living, vital truths, to *him*. Even in discourses of a logical character, where the reasoning approaches almost to mathematical demonstration, the hearers will not be impressed, they will scarcely listen with patience, unless they are persuaded that the conclusions to which the speaker would force them are the deliberate, solemn convictions of his own mind.

The orator needs to remember that the communication of thought and feeling from mind to mind is not a process which depends on a proper selection of words only. Language is only one of the media through which moral convictions and impressions are conveyed from the speaker to the hearer. There is another and more spiritual conductor, a mysterious, inexplicable moral contagion, by means of which, independently of the words, the speaker's thoughts and feelings are transmitted to his auditory. This quality,—call it personal magnetism, call it a divine afflatus, call it, with Dr. Bushnell, a person's *atmosphere*, or what you will,—is the one all-potent element which, more than any other, distinguishes the true orator. It is an intangible influence, an invisible efflux of personal power which radiates from the orator's nature like heat from iron; which attracts and holds an audience as a magnet draws and holds steel-filings; and no physical gifts, no mere intellectual discipline, no intellectual culture, however exquisite or elaborate, will enable him to do without it. A speaker who lacks this quality may tickle the ear of his auditors, and even be praised for his eloquence; but he will never take the public mind by storm, or mould and shape men to his purposes. He may copy the very manner of other orators whose lips have been touched by the divine fire,—he may reproduce the very thoughts and language which on other similar occasions have thrilled men's hearts; but the words which, when spoken by the inspired orator, stirred all

souls to their depths, will be hollow, powerless, and vapid. The rod may be the rod of an enchanter, but it is not in the magician's hand, and it will not conjure. On the other hand, one who has this quality, though unlettered and rude in speech, will often, by a few simple, earnest words welling from the depths of the soul, thrill and captivate the hearts which the most laboured rhetoric has left untouched.

We are told that one day a man went to Demosthenes, and in a style of speaking void of vehemence and energy, that was wholly unsuited to a strong accusation, asked him to be his advocate against a person from whom, he said, he had suffered an assault. "Not you, indeed," said the orator, in a cold, indifferent tone, "you have suffered no such thing." "What!" cried the man passionately, raising his voice, "have I not received those blows?" "Ay, now," replied Demosthenes, "you speak like a person that has been really injured." Lord Mansfield's great lack as a speaker was a want of feeling. He had every attribute of the orator but genius and heart. The intense earnestness of Charles James Fox is well known to all. When Sheridan, after passing a night in the House of Commons, was asked what his impression was, he said that he had been chiefly struck with the difference of manner between Fox and Lord Stormont. The latter began by declaring in a slow, solemn, drawling, nasal tone, that "when he considered the enormity and the unconstitutional tendency of the measures just proposed, he was hurried away in a torrent of passion and a whirlwind of impetuosity," pausing between every word and syllable; while the first, speaking with the rapidity of lightning, and with breathless anxiety and impatience, said that "such was the magnitude, such the importance, such the vital interest of this question, that he could not help imploring, he could not help adjuring the House to come to it with the utmost coolness, the utmost deliberation." There is a whole treatise

on oratory condensed in Sheridan's discriminating remark, which won him Fox's friendship. "I have heard," says Emerson, "an experienced counsellor say that he never feared the effect upon a jury of a lawyer who does not believe in his heart that his client ought to have a verdict. If he does not believe it, his unbelief will appear to the jury, despite of all his protestations, and will become their unbelief. This is that law whereby a work of art, of whatever kind, sets us in the same state of mind wherein the artist was when he made it. That which we do not believe, we cannot adequately say, though we may repeat the words never so often. It was this conviction which Swedenborg expressed, when he described a group of persons in the spiritual world, endeavouring in vain to articulate a proposition which they did not believe; but they could not, though they twisted and folded their lips even to indignation." It is to the honour of Daniel Webster, that if a cause which he argued was bad, he saw its infirmity so distinctly that his advocacy proved an injury rather than a help to it. But if it was good, or hung evenly poised, no sophistry of counsel, no jugglery of words, could hide its merits. He held it with a grip like that of death.

It is well known that all great actors, when they have succeeded perfectly in their art, have been themselves infected by the passion the contagion of which they wished to communicate to others. For the time they felt as if they actually were the characters they personated. It is said that the tragic enchantress, Mrs. Siddons, from the moment she stepped into the carriage which was to take her to the theatre, till her return home, felt entirely as the person whom she was to represent, and could not, without pain, admit into her mind any other feeling. John Kemble, her brother, tells us that in one of her grand displays of tragic passion, her sweeping gait and menacing mien so spoke the goddess, that he was struck dumb,—his voice stuck in his throat. For

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some moments he stood paralysed, and could not force the words from his lips. The great French tragedian, Baron, who was naturally timid, always felt as a hero for several days after he had performed any of the chief characters in Corneille's plays.

All the great productions of literature, all the great musical compositions which have entranced the souls of men, have owed their enchantment, in a great measure, to the profound feeling of which they were the expression. When Gray was asked the secret of the inspiration of "The Bard," a poem which has a rush and flow like that of Pindar's lyrics, he replied: "Why, I felt myself to be the bard." On the other hand, the reason why Young's "Night Thoughts" fails to impress the reader (especially if he knows the author's character) is the lack of genuine feeling in the poem. The deep gloom which the poet has thrown over his pictures is felt to be a trick of art rather than the terrific thunder-cloud, "the earthquake and eclipse" of nature; and the diminution of effect is proportional to what the impression would have been, had his exaggerated grief been real. When Handel was interrogated concerning his ideas and feelings when he composed the Hallelujah chorus, he replied in his broken English: "I did think I did see all heaven before me, and the great God himself." While engaged in the composition his excitement often rose to such a pitch that he would burst into tears. A friend who called upon him as he was setting to music the pathetic words, "He was despised and rejected of men," found him sobbing. "I have heard it related," says Shield, "that when Handel's servant used to bring him chocolate, he often stood in silent astonishment to see his master's tears mixed with the ink as he penned his divine notes." We are told that the motion of his pen, rapid as it was, could not keep pace with the rapidity of his conception. The mechanical power of the hand was not

sufficient for the current of ideas which flowed through that volcanic brain.

From all this it is plain that the only way to speak well in the senate, in the pulpit, or on the platform, is to banish every thought of self,—to think only of one's subject. The triumphs of true eloquence, touching, grand, sublime, awful, as they sometimes have been, are seen only when the orator stands before you in the simple majesty of truth, and, overpowered by the weight of his convictions, forgets himself and forgets everything but the truths he has to utter. You think not of who speaks, or how he speaks, but of what is spoken; transported by his pathos, your rapt imagination pictures new visions of happiness; subdued by the gushes of his tenderness, your tears mingle with his; determined by the power of his reasoning, you are prompt to admit, if not prepared to yield to, the force of his arguments; entering with your whole heart and soul into the subject of his address, you sympathise with the strong emotions which you see are in his bosom, burning and struggling for utterance; and soon find yourself moving onward with him on the same impetuous and resistless current of feeling and passion. "It is amazing," says Goldsmith, "to what heights eloquence of this kind may reach. This is that eloquence which the ancients represented as lightning, bearing down every opposer; this is the power which has turned whole assemblies into astonishment, admiration, and awe; that is described by the torrent, the flame, and every other instance of irresistible impetuosity."

While deep sensibility is necessary to the orator, it must not be overpowering, so as to prevent his self-control, and lead to an undignified and theatrical exhibition of himself. "If you would have me weep" (or "shed tears," or "bewail"), you must first grieve yourself," says Horace; and Bautain observes that this precept is true only for those who write in the

closet, and does not apply to the orator. In this we think he is mistaken, for the poet applies to the emotion of the hearer a stronger word than to that of the actor or speaker, thus intimating that the latter best achieves his aim by a milder exhibition of feeling than that which he would excite in the breasts of his audience. As the prophets of old were not allowed to lose all control of themselves, even in their most ecstatic moments, so the orator should preserve some self-restraint even in his grandest flights. As a rule, he should "weep with his voice, and not with his eyes;" and, however intense his emotions, restrain them sufficiently, at least, for his ideas and sentiments to find expression. The feelings must not explode at once, but escape little by little, so as to animate the whole body of the discourse.

It is a mistake to suppose that truth to nature requires that, in the artistic reproduction of her material forms, she should be servilely copied. It is the inner life, the hidden spirit, that should be sought for in the imitation of her mysteries; and therefore the true artist, in every attempt to express them, will observe a certain reverent modesty and delicate reserve. The Attic artist understood this so well, that he made it a law of his art. Even in portraying the most violent passions, such as the despair of Niobe and the agony of Laocoön and his sons writhing in the coil of the serpents, care is taken to avoid all offensive literalness and particularity. The painter who depicted the sacrifice of Iphigenia at Aulis, lavished all the resources of his art on the other figures of the group, but hid the countenance of Agamemnon in the folds of his robe, leaving to the imagination to conceive what art was powerless fully to convey. So the great orator of Greece was careful, even in his most impassioned bursts, not to "overstep the modesty of nature." Even in the very "torrent, tempest, and whirlwind" of his passion, he always manifested that self-mastery and reserved

force, that temperance of action and utterance, which are essential to sustained power in delivery.

It is natural to suppose that it is the thunderbolt of eloquence, rather than "the still, small voice," which produces the greatest effects upon audiences; but, great as have been the recorded effects of some oratorical explosions, it may be doubted whether, after all, it is not the subdued expression of conviction and feeling, when the speaker, instead of giving full vent to his emotions, is seen labouring with a strong effort to suppress them, that is most powerful. There are times when even silence is eloquent,—more vocal than utterance, more expressive than gesture. The conduct of Job and his three friends who sat down together seven days and seven nights, no one speaking a word to them, was more eloquent of their woe than all their subsequent complainings. There are emotions that mock at all attempts to give them expression. The Bible refers to a joy unspeakable, to groans which cannot be uttered, and to a voiceless praise. "Grief has no tongue to proclaim its keenest sorrows. Despair is speechless and torpid. Horror is dumb. The rhetorical pause is, therefore, founded in nature." But when feeling is not too intense for utterance, the veiled expression of it is often the most effective. Who has not felt, at some time, the power of a whisper or deep low utterance, distinctly giving forth some earnest sentence? Talma, the French actor, declared that he had studied forty years to be energetic without noise. The biographer of F. W. Robertson tells us that it was because he was not mastered by his excitement but, at the very point of being mastered, mastered *himself*,—because he was apparently cool while at a white heat, so that he made his audience glow with the fire, and at the same time respect the self-possessive power of the speaker,—that his eloquence was so conquering.

We know that in private life a speaker who, feeling deeply

upon some subject, veils his emotions in part, and suffers only glimpses of them to be seen, impresses us more powerfully than one who gives loose to a pure and unsuppressed flow of feeling. The mourner who allows only an occasional broken sob to escape him, touches our sympathies more deeply than if he were to break out into loud and passionate wailings and lamentations. It has been justly said that the crazy duellist, who was wont to break away suddenly from any pursuit he was engaged in, as if forced by some demon of passion, and, pacing off a certain distance on the floor, repeat the significant words, "one, two, three, fire! he's dead!" then wring his hands and turn abruptly to his former pursuits, gave a more touching exhibition of the agony which was praying upon his spirit, than if he had vented it in constant howlings of remorse. Hence Shakspeare, with that keen insight into human nature which characterises all his portraitures, makes Antony betray but occasional signs of grief for Cæsar's death. Apologising for any involuntary escape of sorrow, he tells the citizens that he dares not trust himself to indulge in an adequate expression of his grief:

> "Bear with me;
> My heart is in the coffin there with Cæsar;
> And I must pause till it come back to me.
> O masters! if I were disposed to stir
> Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,
> I should do Brutus wrong and Cassius wrong,
> Who, you all know, are honourable men:
> I will not do them wrong; I rather choose
> To wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you,
> Than I will wrong such honourable men."

When a speaker who is deeply moved, using a gentler mode of expression than the facts might warrant, appears thus to stifle his feelings and studiously to keep them within bounds, the effect of this partial concealment is to give them

an appearance of greater intensity and strength. In all such cases of obscure and indirect expression of emotion, the imagination is called into play; the jets of flame that escape now and then,—the suppressed bursts of feeling,—the partial eruptions of passion,—are regarded as but hints or faint intimations of the volcano within. The studied calmness of the speaker's manner and language produces a reaction in the hearer's mind, and, rushing into the opposite extreme, he is moved more deeply than by the most vehement and passionate declamation. There is also, as it has been well observed, the further advantage in this partial disguising of passion, that the determination being left to the imagination of the hearer, it can never seem to him disproportionate,—too weak or too strong.

The advantage of WIT to the orator is obvious. Not only does it give a passing relief to the tension of the mind that has been plied with declamation or reasoning, and thus prepare it for renewed attention, but it is a powerful weapon of attack, and sometimes in reply a happy witticism neutralises the force of a strong and elaborate argument. A volume of reasoning may be condensed into a keen retort, and the absurdity of an opponent's statements or logic may be exposed by an impromptu jest more effectually than by a series of syllogisms. Many a fallacy has been pricked to death by the needle of ridicule, which the club of logic has thumped in vain. Some of the greatest orators have owed much of their power and influence to this talent. Mr. Francis, the author of "Orators of the Age," goes so far as to say of J. Milner Gibson, M.P., that one witty expression of his, in which he described the Whig ministry, at a certain time, as being made of "squeezable" materials, contributed considerably towards gaining for him the position he held in the estimation of the House of Commons. The polished irony of Canning, more than his powers of reasoning and

declamation, was dreaded by his antagonists in the British Parliament. It was the sarcasm of Pitt, "at once keen and splendid, brilliant and concise," which enabled him, while yet a youth, to stand up single-handed, and effectually repel the assaults of the most powerful opposition ever arrayed against a Prime Minister. "He could dispose of an adversary," says a writer, "by a sentence or a single phrase; or, without stepping aside, get rid of him in a parenthesis, and then go forward to his object,—thus increasing the contemptuousness of the expression by its brevity and indifference, as if his victim had been too insignificant to give any trouble."

Good sense and wit, we are told, were the great weapons of Sheridan's oratory,—shrewdness in detecting the weak points of an adversary, and infinite powers of raillery in exposing them. These qualities made him a more formidable antagonist to Pitt than others who had more learning and general ability. A fair specimen of his happiness in retort was his answer to Pitt when the latter compared Sheridan's constant opposition to an eternal drag-chain, clogging all the wheels, retarding the career, and embarrassing the movements of government. Sheridan replied that a real drag-chain differed from this imaginary drag-chain of the minister, in one important essential; it was applied only when the machine was *going down the hill.* Curran's wit was so keen-edged, and his humour so rich and inexhaustible, that he is remembered for them even more than for the pathos with which he melted his countrymen, and the lava of invective which he poured out upon the authors of their wrongs. The wit and humour of O'Connell told home upon his hearers as effectually as his power of terse, nervous, Demosthenic reasoning, his pathos, and the matchless skill with which he condensed and pointed his case.

It was the wit and humour, aided by the good nature of

Lord North, the Tory minister of England, which enabled him, during the disastrous defeats of the American war, to bear up triumphantly against the ceaseless and furious attacks of Burke, Fox, Pitt, and the other Whig chiefs. By a plain, homely answer, says Lord Brougham, "he could blunt the edge of the fiercest or most refined sarcasm; with his pleasantry, never far-fetched, or overdone, or forced, he could turn away wrath, and refresh the jaded listeners; while, by his undisturbed temper, he made them believe he had the advantage, and could turn into a laugh, at the assailant's expense, the invective which had been destined to crush himself." Thus, when Alderman Sawbridge presented a petition from Billingsgate, and accompanied it with much vituperation of the minister, Lord North began his reply: "I will not deny that the worthy alderman speaks the sentiments, nay, the very language, of his constituents," etc. Again, when a vehement declaimer, calling aloud for his head, turned round and perceived his victim unconsciously indulging in a soft slumber, and, becoming still more exasperated, denounced the minister as capable of "sleeping over the ruin of his country,—asleep at a time,"—North only muttered, "I wish to Heaven I was." So when a dull, somniferous speaker manifested a similar indignation, because his speech produced its natural effect upon the minister, the latter contented himself with observing how hard it was that he should be grudged so very natural a release from considerable suffering.

Lord Erskine added the talent of wit to his other forensic gifts; and the effect of his sallies, we are told, was not merely to relieve the dryness of legal discussions, but to advance his cause. On one occasion, he was counsel for a man named Bolt, who had been assailed by the opposing counsel for dishonesty: "Gentlemen," replied Erskine, "my learned friend has taken unwarrantable liberties with my client's good name. He is so remarkably of an opposite character that he goes by

the name of Bolt-upright." This was pure invention. Again, in an action against a stage-coach proprietor by a gentleman who had suffered from an upset, Erskine began: "Gentlemen of the jury, the plaintiff is Mr. Beverley, a respectable merchant of Liverpool, and the defendant is Mr. Wilson, proprietor of the Swan with Two Necks in Lad Lane,—a sign emblematic, I suppose, of the number of necks people ought to possess who travel by his vehicles." On another occasion he was employed to defend an action against the proprietors of a stage-coach by Polito (the keeper of a celebrated menagerie) for the loss of a trunk. "Why," asked Erskine, "did he not take a lesson from his own sagacious elephant, and travel with his trunk before him?"

All the world is familiar with the sarcasms of Disraeli (Lord Beaconsfield); his hits at Peel as one who had "caught the Whigs bathing, and run away with their clothes,"—as a politician who had always "traded on the ideas of others, whose life had been one huge appropriation clause," etc. Wit was not merely the handmaid of Disraeli's genius; it was the right arm of his power. Much of its point is due to his by-play,—to the subtle modulations of his voice, his peculiar shrug, and the air of icy coolness and indifference with which he utters his sneers and sarcasms. Nothing can be more polished than his irony; it is the steeled hand in the silken glove. Yet, on account of its personality and vindictiveness, it cannot be commended for imitation. As it has been well said, the adder lurks under the rose-leaves of his rhetoric; the golden arrows are tipped with poison.

A good example of the effect of a witticism in neutralising the force of an eloquent appeal, was furnished by George Wood, of the New York bar, in a case, tried some years ago at Philadelphia, involving the possession of Princeton Seminary. The eloquent William C. Preston, of South Carolina, addressed the court and jury for three days, in a speech of

great rhetorical beauty. "May it please the court, and gentlemen of the jury," said Mr. Wood in reply, "if you propose to follow me, you will come down from the clouds where you have been for the last three days, and walk on the earth." The effect on Mr. Preston's pyrotechnics was like a sudden shower upon fireworks.

It has been said that no speaker can have much influence who merely amuses his hearers,—that even in politics, the most effective orators are not those who make the people laugh. All this is true enough; but if audiences do not need to be amused, they need to be kept awake and alive; and for this nothing is more effectual than an occasional sally of wit. It is said, again, that wit is dangerous, which is also true; and so is everything that is energetic. The cultivation of science is dangerous; the practice of charity is dangerous; eloquence is particularly dangerous; a dunce is almost as dangerous as a genius; nothing is absolutely harmless but mediocrity. It is easy to abstain from excess in the use of faculties which Nature has doled out to us with miserly frugality. But that wit may give an added charm and zest to eloquence, without needlessly wounding men's feelings, encouraging levity in its possessor, or mocking at things which should be held in reverence, is proved by a long line of examples, beginning long before him of whom it was said, that

> "His wit in the combat, as gentle as bright,
> Never carried a heart-stain away on its blade,"

and reaching down to some of the most brilliant speakers of the present half century.

Some of the ancient rhetoricians were accustomed to insist on VIRTUE as an essential qualification of the orator, on the ground that a good character, which can be established in no better way than by deserving it, has great weight with an audience. This is evidently incorrect; for, though it is true

that a reputation for uprightness adds to a speaker's influence, yet it no more belongs to the orator as such, than wealth, rank, or a fine person, all of which have manifestly the same effect. But, though not an indispensable requisite of the orator, there is no doubt that a reputation for integrity gives to his words a weight and potency which he cannot afford to despise. M. Droz, in his *Essai sur l'Art Oratoire*, justly affirms that there is no people sunk so low in immorality as to make the reputation of him who addresses them wholly indifferent to them. There is no deeper law in human nature than that which compels men to withhold their respect and confidence from one who violates or disregards the primary principles of morality. Dr. Franklin was so strongly convinced of this that he regarded a reputation for honesty as more important to a speaker than even the "action" which Demosthenes so earnestly emphasised. In his Diary, under date of July 27, 1784, he states that Lord Fitzmaurice having come to him for advice, he "mentioned the old story of Demosthenes' answer to one who demanded what was the first point of oratory. *Action.* The second? *Action.* The third? *Action.* Which, I said, had been generally understood to mean the action of an orator with his hands, etc., in speaking; but that I thought another kind of action of more importance to an orator, who would persuade people to follow his advice, viz., such a course of action in the conduct of life as would impress them with an opinion of his integrity as well as of his understanding; that, this opinion once established, all the difficulties, delays, and oppositions, usually caused by doubts and suspicions, were prevented; and such a man, though a very imperfect speaker, would almost carry his points against the most flourishing orator who had not the character of sincerity."

The reason, doubtless, which suggested this advice in the present instance, was the character of Lord Fitzmaurice's

father, Lord Shelburne, who though a man of high talent, was regarded as insincere. There is no doubt that in the long and bitter struggle in the British Parliament between Pitt and Fox, it was the superior integrity of the former that gave him, in spite of the icy hardness of his character, the victory over his antagonist. It was the influence which his blameless purity of life gave to his words, that made them so potent with the people, and enabled him to treat the taunts and reproaches of his enemy with haughty silence, and that superb contempt which was so marked a trait of his character. Fox possessed many amiable social qualities, warm affections, a placable and forgiving disposition, and a sweet and winning temper, which nothing could sour. But, though he was immensely popular with his associates, his countrymen generally had no confidence in him; and the effect of his burning and electrical appeals was to a great extent neutralised, because they looked upon him as a reckless *débauché*, who spent his days in drinking and gambling with the Prince of Wales. Even those who admired everything in his talents and much in his qualities, we are told, regretted that his name never ceased to excite in their minds the idea of gamesters and bacchanals, even after he was acknowledged to have abandoned their society. Those who held his opinions were almost sorry that he should have championed them, when they saw with what malicious exultation those who rejected them could recite his profligate life, in place of an argument, to invalidate their force. It was in vain that he gave his days to the serfs in Africa and to the helots in America, while he gave his nights to champagne and ombre. When in 1782 he was confidently expecting to be made prime minister, Dr. Price, who went beyond him in his devotion to liberal principles, protested against his appointment in a Fast Sermon, which was circulated throughout the kingdom. "Can you imagine," he asked, "that a spendthrift in his own concerns

will make an economist in managing the concerns of others! —that a wild gamester will take due care of the state of a kingdom?"

It is often said that the weight and pertinency of a man's arguments have no necessary connection with his morals that the most illogical reasonings may come from the lips of a man of invulnerable reputation, and the most triumphant proofs of a proposition be adduced by one who is profligate in morals. But daily experience shows that the world reasons differently; and nothing is more certain than that one glaring vice in a public speaker will sometimes preclude all confidence in his reasonings, and render futile the strongest efforts of his talents. "What care I what you say," exclaims Emerson "when what you do stands over my head, and thunders in my ear so loud that I cannot hear what you say?" It was said of Sheridan that, had he but possessed trustworthiness of character, he might have ruled the world; whereas, living only to dazzle and amuse, he had no weight or influence either in politics or life. On the other hand, Washington who had no oratorical gifts, had such weight in the Congress that formed the Constitution, that when he delivered his opinion in a few pithy sentences, the mere declaimers sank into insignificance. Baxter, in a passage quoted by Phillips Brooks, tells us that in the English civil wars "an abundance of the ignorant sort of the common people which were civil did flock into the Parliament, and filled up their armies merely because they heard men *swear* for the Common Prayer and bishops, and heard men *pray* that were against them. And all the sober men that I was acquainted with who were against the Parliament, were wont to say, 'The King hath the better cause, but the Parliament the better men.'" "I suppose," adds Dr. Brooks, "that no cause could be so good that, sustained by bad men, and opposed to any error whose champions were men of spotless lives, it would not fall." Had

Luther's words been contradicted by his life, they never would have rung through Germany like a trumpet, and become, as Richter said of them, "half battles."

In thus enumerating the qualifications of the orator, we would not be understood as implying that the essential secret of his art can be learned from any such description. It is in vain to attempt to explain his magnetism, the mighty effects which he works, by a *catalogue raisonnée* of his qualities. Eloquence, like a genius for invention, for music or painting, is primarily a gift of God, and we shall never be able to grasp or describe it by seizing upon its forms. Like that of beauty, music, or a delicious odour, its charm is subtle and impalpable, and baffles all our efforts to explain it in words. There are persons whose looks and manner charm us at first sight; we are drawn to them by an irresistible fascination; there is a spell upon us the moment we see them; as was said by Saint-Simon of Fénélon, it requires an effort to cease to look at them. But in vain would we try to analyse the causes of our impressions; we only know that there are certain faces with "a witching smile and pawky een," that find us all more or less vulnerable, though their shafts are shot, so to speak, from an ambush. Who can explain the hidden life of the rose? The botanist can take the flower to pieces, and show you the stamens, calyx, and corolla; but he cannot put his finger on the mysterious thing which holds them together, and makes the living flower. The life escapes his grasp. Beauty, says Goethe, "is inexplicable; it appears to us as a dream, when we contemplate the works of great artists; it is a hovering, floating, and glittering shadow, whose outline eludes the grasp of definition. Mendelssohn and others tried to catch beauty as a butterfly, and pin it down for inspection. They have succeeded in the same way as they are likely to succeed with the butterfly. The poor animal trembles and struggles, and its brightest colours are gone; or, if you catch it without

spoiling the colours, you have at best a stiff and awkward corpse. But a corpse is not an *entire* animal; it wants that which is essential in all things, namely, life,—spirit, which sheds beauty on everything." Who, again, can explain the mystery of the musician's art? Why is it that the simplest strains sometimes so thrill and melt the heart? How is it that an old song, which we have heard a thousand times before, can, in certain moods, so joyfully or sadly touch our souls? We cannot pluck out the heart of this mystery. We simply know that there is a divine power, an inexplicable sorcery, lodged in this art of arts; that by its magical airs and melodies it can open the floodgates of the soul, and wet the eye with unbidden tears, or fill the heart with gladness, till joy, like madness, pours out its sparkles from the clear depths of the eyes.

So with eloquence. Its subtle spell is alike inexplicable. To suppose that it is a trick of language, or look, or gestures which one man can learn from another, is an illusion. It act, by virtue of some hidden principle, some electric or magnetic quality, which is seen in its *effects*, but which utterly eludes analysis. It is not an effect, necessarily, of scholarship and polished periods. It does not depend upon brilliant rhetoric, a vivid imagination, or upon winning looks, or a commanding *physique*. Nor does it consist of "something greater and higher than all these,—action, noble, sublime, godlike action." Who that has ever listened to a mighty orator has not felt how inadequate were all attempts to describe him? In vain does one expatiate on the beauty or nobleness of his person, his regal carriage, his speaking eye, his clarion-like voice, the admirable arrangement of his arguments, his wit, his pathos, the fluency and magnificence of his language, his exquisite observance of the temper of his audience. All these qualifications he may possess, and we may be sure that all these cannot co-exist without constituting a great orator; but when we have said all, we feel that there is something more,

—something indefinable, and more vital than all the rest,—which we have left untold. It is, in short, an inventory, rather than a description; "the play of Hamlet with the part of Hamlet left out." We have failed as inevitably and signally as if we should attempt to portray the matchless beauty of the Belvedere Apollo by an enumeration of its visible qualities. We might extol its exquisite proportions, expressing strength and swiftness, the anatomical truth of its attitude, the life-like beauty of its features, and the inimitable delicacy and fineness of its workmanship; and the catalogue of its excellences, so far as it went, would be faultless; but who that had ever seen the divine original would say that we had conveyed even a proximately distinct impression of the bounding grace, the matchless symmetry, and above all, the air of celestial dignity, which electrifies every spectator of "the statue that enchants the world,"—a statue whose constituent qualities can no more be described than they can be misunderstood by any beholder with eyes and intelligence?

Nor can even the orator himself explain the secret of his art. In the work of all the great masters there are certain elements that are a mystery to themselves. In the fire of creation they instinctively infuse into their productions certain qualities of which they would be utterly puzzled to give an account. It is so in music, in sculpture, in painting, and even in the military art. When Napoleon was asked by a flatterer of his generalship, how he won his victories, he replied: "My God! it is natural to me; I was made so." Genius, says a French writer, has its unconscious acts, like beauty, like infancy. When an infant charms you by its artless smile, it does not know that its smile is artless. The effect which the orator achieves is due not merely to his separate gifts, but to their mystic and inexplicable union, and to a certain magic art that works like an instinct,—an art by which, like the

painter in his moments of ecstasy, the poet in his moments of frenzy, he flings over his work a light "that never was by sea or land," and "leavens it all with the mystical spirit of beauty, and pathos, and power,—like the indefinable light which hovers in the eyes of the Madonna of Raphael, like the immeasurable power which seems to threaten in the frescoes of Angelo."

The difficulty of discovering the secret of eloquence will appear still farther, if we consider the almost infinite varieties of oratorical excellence, the innumerable ways in which the enthusiasm of crowds is kindled. The eloquence of some speakers, from its first small beginning to the broad, grand peroration, reminds you of a calm and beautiful river, that winds its course unruffled by the wind,—now pausing on its pebbly bed, now shooting arrow-like along, now widening and swelling into deep, lake-like pools, now contracting its deep channel in some narrow gorge, till at last it pours its full volume into the sea. The eloquence of another is like a mountain torrent, which, sweeping all obstacles before it, rolls on with an impetuous, ever-swelling flood, and a loud and increasing roar, filling the valleys with its thunders, and overflowing its embankments far and wide, till it spends its fury on the plain or in some vast lake. One speaker appeals to the reason rather than to the passions, and seeks to convince rather than to persuade; another abounds in startling apostrophes and soul-stirring appeals, which the former, in the proud consciousness of his argumentative power, seems wholly to disdain. There are profound reasoners, who, by the sheer supremacy of intellect, by force of will and their own absolute conviction, implant within us vital sentiments which we cannot dislodge, and which send us away thinking, feeling, resolving; and, again, there are itinerant preachers, spiritual tinkers, and reformed inebriates, who, by the mere force of personal enthusiasm, of vehement physical passion,

raise us to dizzy heights of excitement, and draw tears from eyes unused to weep. There are speakers who cultivate all the seductive arts of address, and who try to propitiate their hearers by studied exordiums; there are others who accomplish equally great, or even greater, results, by standing bolt-upright, disdaining all action, making a rush at once at the very pith and marrow of the question, and firing off their sentences in short, quick volleys, like those of a steam-gun.

The great orator of Greece spent so many weeks and months upon his speeches that his enemies said they smelt of the lamp; Webster prepared his immortal reply to Hayne in a single night. Lord Chatham, to perfect his use of language, read Bailey's dictionary twice over, and articulated before a glass; Patrick Henry affected a greater slovenliness of style and rusticity of pronunciation than was natural to him, and declared that "*naiteral* parts is better than all the *larning* upon *yearth*." The former, an inveterate actor, and fastidious in his toilette, carefully adjusted his dress before speaking; the other slouched into the legislature with his greasy leather-breeches and shooting-jacket. Henry Clay, with the most commonplace thoughts, often charmed his hearers by the musical tones of his voice; Brougham electrified his audience by notes as harsh and hoarse as the scream of the eagle. Sheil produced his effects by rapid, electric sentences, like bolts from a thunder-cloud; still greater effects were produced by the "drawling, but fiery" sentences of Grattan. William Pitt, with a stiff figure and a solemn posture, like that of a passionless automaton, swayed the House of Commons with stately, flowing, sonorous sentences, in which "a couple of powdered lacqueys of adjectives waited on every substantive;" Fox, until he got warmed with his subject, hesitated and stammered,—often kept on for a long time in a tame and commonplace strain,—but gaining impetus and inspiration as he proceeded, swept the House, at

last, with a hurricane of eloquence. Hamilton declared that the oratory of the former appeared to him "languid eloquence;" that of the latter, "spirited vulgarity." The greatest bursts of oratory have generally been improvised, and their effects enhanced by apt and significant gesture; but Dr. Chalmers, one of the most powerful of pulpit orators, spoke from manuscript, and hardly moved a finger. Mirabeau, the most stormy, electric, and resistless of French orators, pursued a middle course; he took the brief of an oration, as he mounted the tribune, from the hand of a friend; and many of his best passages, short, rapid, and electrical, flashed out from between the trains of arguments laboriously prepared for him, like lightning through the clouds. Such, doubtless, was the case with his comparison of the Gracchi, his celebrated allusion to the Tarpeian Rock, and his apostrophe to Sièyes. Burke, before the spectre of the French Revolution shot across his path, was listened to as a seer by the House of Commons; but, after that event, his Cassandra-like croakings bored his hearers, and his rising to speak was a signal for a stampede from the benches.

Some years ago "The Editor's Chair" of "Harper's Magazine" called attention to the contrast between the oratory of Edward Everett and that of John B. Gough. Perhaps no speaker has been listened to with more delight by thousands and tens of thousands that have crowded to hear him than Gough. Year after year he repeats the same discourses, with slight changes, from the same platforms; and year after year men laugh at the same "gape-seed" stories, weep at the same tales of pathos, and are thrilled by the same vivid appeals to their sensibilities. Yet Gough has neither literary genius nor culture, neither personal magnetism nor a musical voice,—indeed, hardly any of the gifts which are deemed essential to the popular orator. He has justly been called "an oratorical actor,—a kind of Fox-

Garrick." On the other hand, Edward Everett, who forty years ago was the prince of rhetoricians, if not the prince of orators in America,—to whose rhythmical and polished periods the scholarly audiences of New England listened with never-ending delight,—was a man of Attic taste and refinement, the highest product of New England culture. Cold, passionless, undramatic, trusting to old, traditional, time-honoured forms in action and delivery, having no deep convictions, and consequently abstaining altogether from what Aristotle calls the agonistical or "wrestling" style of oratory, he delivered his carefully elaborated periods in tones modulated with equal care, and with such a uniform perfection of manner that the whole seemed like the effect of mechanism. Yet he, too, drew admiring crowds, although a more marked contrast to Gough could hardly be named.

One of the greatest of modern orators, Lord Brougham, lays down as a test of a great mind in the senate, the power of making a vigorous reply to a powerful attack. The observation appears a just one, for as "iron sharpeneth iron," the clash of intellect, like the collision of flint and steel, throws out a sparkling stream. Among the distinguished orators of the United States, there have been many striking examples of this power, the most notable, perhaps, being Webster's reply to Calhoun. Naturally, Mr. Webster was of a heavy, sluggish temperament, and required to be assaulted by a formidable antagonist,—to be lashed, and goaded, and driven to the wall, by another giant like himself,—to set his massive energies in motion. For the ordinary parliamentary duello,—that species of intellectual gladiatorship which requires that a man should have a little of the savage in him, to be very successful in it,—he had little taste. But give him a great occasion, and an adversary worth grappling with, —a foeman worthy of his steel,—and he rises with the exigencies of the occasion, and displays the giant strength of

his intellect, the fiery vehemence of his sensibility, his brilliant imagination, and his resistless might of will, to terrible advantage. When thus roused and stimulated, his pent-up stores of passion burst forth with volcanic force; he presses into his service all the weapons of oratory; the toughest sophistries of his adversaries are rent asunder like cobwebs; denunciation and sarcasm are met with sarcasm and denunciation still more crushing and incurably wounding; and his style has, at times, a Miltonic grandeur and roll which are rarely surpassed for majestic eloquence.

Among the orators of Great Britain Lord Brougham himself was one of the most remarkable illustrations of his own remark. When his faculties were stimulated by assault, no man rose more readily with the greatness of the occasion, or poured out a more fearful torrent of scathing invective, with all the peculiarities of look, tone, and gesture, which drive a pointed observation home. His enunciation was naturally harsh, yet it was so modulated, we are told, that the hearer was carried through a series of involved sentences without perplexity, until, at the close, the orator literally pierced the intellect by the concluding phrase, which was the keynote to the whole. In days gone by, Brougham and Canning "used to watch each other across the table, eagerly waiting for the advantage of reply; the graceful and accomplished orator being aware that his rival, by a single intonation, or even a pointing of a finger, could overwhelm with ridicule the substance of a well-prepared speech." One of the most effective British speakers in reply at a later day, was Sir Robert Peel. His tenacious memory preserved every point of his adversary's argument, and his practical intellect enabled him to hit an objection "between wind and water." Lord Macaulay, on the other hand, though he always chained the attention of the House by his set efforts, could not speak in reply.

That climate and race have not a little to do with eloquence, is an obvious fact. The style called Asiatic, for example, is marked, like all oriental compositions, by an excess of imagination; the wings are disproportioned to the body. Cicero, in speaking of it, says: "No sooner had eloquence ventured to sail from the Piræus, than she traversed all the isles and visited every part of Asia, till at last, infected with their manners, she lost all the purity and healthy complexion of the Attic style, and, indeed, almost forgot her native language." It is a curious fact noted by a late writer, that the climatic conditions of extreme heat and cold have a similar effect on the imaginative faculty, causing it to overshadow all the others, as may be seen in the poetry of Arabia and Hindostan and the Edda of Scandinavia. The Irish and the French are born orators; and South American people have a great advantage over the New-Englanders, who, as Emerson says, live in a climate so cold that they scarcely dare to open their mouths wide. Yet the rule has many exceptions, and Nature is perpetually startling us with her freaks and anomalies. Who that ever listened to Rufus Choate, so oriental both in his looks and style of speech would have fancied, before being told, that he was a product of the same rocky soil as Jeremiah Mason and Daniel Webster? Or who would have dreamed of finding in a child of Maine a genius as fiery and fervid, an imagination as tropical in its fruitfulness and splendour, as any that blooms in oriental climes? Yet such were the qualities of Sargent S. Prentiss, whom, reasoning *a priori*, one would have expected to possess an understanding as solid as the granite of her hills, and a temperament as cold as her climate. So, it has been happily said, "the flora of the South is more gorgeous and variegated than that of less favoured climes; but occasionally there springs up in the cold North a flower of as delicate a perfume as any within the tropics. The heavens

in the equatorial regions are bright with golden radiance, and the meteors shoot with greater effulgence through the air; but even the snow-clad hills of the North flash, from time to time, with the glories of the Aurora Borealis. Under the line are found more numerous volcanoes, constantly throwing up their ashes and their flames; but none of them excel in grandeur the Northern Hecla, from whose deep caverns rolls the melted lava down its ice-bound sides."

If the gifts of the impassioned son of Maine belied his birth-place, not less, in an opposite manner, did those of Carolina's child, John C. Calhoun. Born in a tropical region, where a southern sun is apt to ripen human passion into the rank luxuriance of tropical vegetation, he was as severely logical, as rigidly intellectual, as if he had been reared in Nova Zembla, or any other region above the line of perpetual snow. Dwelling amid the luxuriant life, the magnificence and pomp, the deep-toned harmonies, of the Southern zones, he was as blind to their beauties, as deaf to their melodies, as if he had really been "the cast-iron man" that he was called, and had sprung from the bowels of a granite New Hampshire mountain.

CHAPTER V.

THE ORATOR'S TRIALS.

If the orator has his triumphs, which are as dazzling as any that are the reward of genius and toil, he has also, by that inexorable law of compensation which so largely equalises human conditions, trials which are proportional to his successes. The hearer who "hangs both his greedy ears upon his lips," little dreams of the toils and mortifications the speaker has undergone. The aspirants to oratorical distinction, who envy him his fame and influence, have but a faint conception of the laborious days and sleepless nights which his successes have cost him,—of the distracting cares and interruptions, the nervous fears of failure, or of falling below himself and below public expectation, the treacheries of memory, the exhaustion and collapse of feeling, the self-dissatisfaction and self-disgust, with which the practice of his art has been attended. Armies are not always cheering on the heights which they have won. "The statue does not come to its white limbs at once. It is the bronze wrestler, not the flesh and blood one, that stands for ever over a fallen adversary with the pride of victory on his face." It is a rare intellectual gratification to listen to a finished orator; and so it is delightful to gaze upon tapestry, and we are dazzled by the splendour of the colours, and the cunning intertexture of its purple and gold; but how many of those who are captivated by its beauty turn the arras to see the jagged ends of thread, the shreds and rags of worsted, and the unsightly patchwork, of the reverse side of the picture, or dream of the toil it represents? Yet it is on this side that the artificer sits and works; it is at this picture that he gazes, until oftentimes the splendour he has wrought becomes distasteful, and he would fain abandon his calling for one that exacts

less toil, even though it wins less admiration from the spectator.

There is hardly any public speaker of great celebrity who will not confess that he feels more or less tremor when he rises to speak, on a great occasion,—though it be for the hundredth time. To stand up before a crowded and perhaps imposing assembly, without a scrap of paper, without a chair, perhaps, to lean upon, and trusting to the fertility and readiness of your brain, to attempt a speech amid the profoundest silence, while you are the focus of a thousand eyes, and feel, as they scan or scrutinise you, that you are under the necessity of winning and holding the attention of all those listeners for an hour, or hours,—is a trying task, and demands hardly less nerve and self-possession than any other critical situation in life. Those who have often assumed such a task, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, will confess that there are occasions when it is indescribably painful, and that they have no remission from either physical or mental suffering until it is performed.

But what is the cause of this anxiety and misery? Why should it be so much more difficult to address a hundred men than to address one? Why should a man who never hesitates or stammers in pouring out his thoughts to a friend or a circle of friends, be embarrassed or struck dumb if he attempts to say the same things, however suitable, to fifty persons? Why is it that though he is awed by the presence of no one of them, and even feels himself to be intellectually superior to every individual he faces, yet collectively they inspire him with awe, if not with terror? How comes it that though he has a steady flow of ideas and words when he sits in a chair, he cannot think on his legs; that even a half-reclining posture does not check improvisation, but perpendicularity paralyses him? Whatever may be the explanation of the phenomenon, we are all familiar with it. If we have

not had personal experience of that Belshazzarish knocking of the knees, and that cleaving of the tongue to the roof o the mouth, which sometimes afflicts the public speaker in the most unexpected and mysterious manner, we have had occasion, probably, to witness painful instances of it in the experiences of others. There is hardly a more distressing position in which a human being can be placed, than that of the newly-fledged orator, who looks upon "a sea of upturned faces" for the first time, and, in a fright, forgets what he had to say. He may have repeated his speech forty times in his study, in the woods to the trees, or in his garden to the cabbages, without hesitating or omitting a word; yet the moment he mounts the platform and faces an audience, his intense consciousness of the human presence, of its reality, and of the impossibility of escaping it, petrifies the mind, paralyses all his powers.

Even the most distinguished orators tell us that their first attempts at public speaking were fiery ordeals; and not a few broke down opprobriously, "throttling their practised accents in their fears," and losing the thread of their thoughts in an access of helpless consternation. The brightest wits have been disgraced in this way as well as the dullest. The likelihood of such a result is, indeed, just in proportion to the speaker's oratorical gifts. Men of the finest genius and the most thorough accomplishment in other respects, often fail as public speakers from sheer excess of ideas, while a mere parrot of a fellow, with little culture and but a thimbleful of brains, "goes off" in a steady stream of words, like a rain-spout in a thunderstorm. As a crowded hall is vacated more slowly and with more difficulty than one with a small assembly, so the very multitude of the thoughts that press to the lips may impede their escape. It is well known, too, that the very delicacy of perception, the exquisite sensibility to impressions, and the impulsiveness, which are the soul of all

eloquence, are almost necessarily accompanied by a certain degree of nervous tremulousness, just as a finely-strung harp vibrates at the slightest touch, or whenever the faintest breeze passes over it.

A certain amount of sensibility is, of course, absolutely indispensable to the orator, and it is, therefore, a good sign when he feels some anxiety before rising to address an assembly. The most valiant troops feel always more or less nervous at the first cannon-shot; and it is said that one of the most famous generals of the French Empire, who was called "the bravest of the brave," was always obliged to dismount from his horse at that solemn moment; after which he rushed like a lion into the fray. But while the orator must feel deeply what he has to say, his feeling must not reach that vehemence which prevents the mind from acting,—which paralyses the expression from the very fulness of the feeling. As a mill-wheel may fail to move from an excess of water as truly as from a lack of it, so there may be a sort of intellectual apoplexy, which obstructs speech, and renders it powerless by the very excess of life. It was, doubtless, for this reason that Rousseau could never speak in public, and that the Abbé Lamennais, who wrote with a pen of fire, never ventured to ascend the pulpit, or even to address a meeting of children.

Kennedy, in his Life of William Wirt, speaks with deep sympathy of the agony of a confused novitiate, whom he saw arise a second time to address a jury, after having stuck fast in his first attempt at utterance. The second essay proving equally unfortunate, he stood silent for a few moments, and then was able to say,—"Gentlemen, I declare to Heaven, that if I had an enemy upon whose head I would invoke the most cruel torture, I could wish him no other fate than to stand where I stand now." Luckily,—and the fact is full of encouragement to other sufferers,—the very sympathy which this

appeal won for him, seemed almost instantly to give him strength. A short pause was followed by another effort, which was crowned with complete, and even triumphant, success. It is well known that Erskine, the great forensic advocate, was at first painfully unready of speech. So embarrassed was he in one of his maiden efforts that he would have abandoned the attempt to harangue juries, had he not felt, as he tells us, his children tugging at his gown, and urging him on, in spite of his boggling and stammering. Sheridan and Disraeli, as all the world knows, "hung fire" in their first speeches, and Curran was almost knocked down by the sound of his own voice when he first addressed his "gentlemen" in a little room of a tavern. The first speech of Cobden, also, who became afterwards one of the most powerful champions of the Anti-Corn-Law League, was a humiliating failure.

It was said that Canning was sure of speaking his best if he rose in a great fright. To feel his heart beating rapidly, to wish the floor would open and swallow him, were signs of an oratorical triumph. At a Mayor's dinner in Liverpool, he was so nervous before he was called on to speak, that he twice left the room in order to collect his thoughts. He has given a graphic narrative of his feelings on making his maiden speech in 1793, when he entered the House of Commons. It is full of encouragement to those who are trembling in view of the same fiery ordeal: "I intended to have told you, at full length, what were my feelings at getting up, and being pointed at by the Speaker, and hearing my name called from all sides of the House; how I trembled lest I should hesitate or misplace a word in the two or three first sentences; while all was dead silence around me, and my own voice sounded to my ears quite like some other gentleman's; how in about ten minutes or less, I got warmed in collision with Fox's arguments, and did not even care twopence for anybody or any-

thing; how I was roused, in about half an hour, from this pleasing state of self-sufficiency, by accidentally casting my eyes toward the Opposition bench, for the purpose of paying compliments to Fox, and assuring him of my respect and admiration, and there seeing certain members of the Opposition laughing (as I thought) and quizzing me; how this accident abashed me, and, together with my being out of breath, rendered me incapable of utterance; how those who sat below me on the Treasury bench, seeing what it was that distressed me, cheered loudly, and the House joined them; and how in less than a minute, straining every nerve in my body, and plucking up every bit of resolution in my heart, I went on more boldly than ever, and getting into a part of my subject that I liked, and having the House with me, got happily and triumphantly to the end."

Dr. Storrs, of New York, one of the most accomplished extemporaneous preachers in America, states that when he delivered his first sermon after his installation in Brooklyn, he made almost a dead failure. He staggered along and floundered for twenty-five minutes, and then stopped. "I sank back on the chair, almost wishing that I had been with Pharaoh and his hosts when the Red Sea went over them!" It is said that a New Hampshire legislator, from one of the rural districts, having stuck fast in his maiden speech, abruptly concluded as fellows: "Mr. Speaker: It is pretty generally considered, I believe, to be pretty impossible for a man to communicate those ideas *whereof he is not possessed of*,"—a proposition which Demosthenes himself would not dispute. "My lords," said the Earl of Rochester on a certain occasion, "I—I—I rise this time,—my lords, I—I—I divide my discourse into four *branches*." Here he came to a halt, and then added: "My lords, if ever I rise again in this House, I give you leave to cut me off, *root and branch*, for ever." When Tristam Burgess, of Rhode Island, was making

a speech in Congress, he directed his eagle eye, and pointed his forefinger, towards his opponent on the floor, and, in this threatening attitude, made a long and emphatic pause. "That pause was terrible," said a fellow-representative to Mr. Burgess after the debate was over. "To no one so terrible as to me," responded the orator, "for I couldn't think of anything to say."

That a public speaker in the beginning of his career should feel more or less of perturbation on rising to address a public assembly, is, as we have said, no marvel; the only marvel is that such embarrassments are not more frequent and more disastrous. When we consider how little is required to disconcert, and even to paralyse him,—a fly on his nose,—a headache or heartache,—the distractions which may assai him, and divert his attention, such as an appearance of slight in his audience, a cough, a yawn, a rude laugh, or even a whisper,—a sudden failure of memory, so that part of his plan, perhaps even its main division, may be suddenly lost,—the dulness of his imagination, which may picture feebly and confusedly the things it presents,—the escape of an unlucky expression,—a sudden idea, an oratorical inspiration, which carries him far away from his theme,—a sentence badly begun, into which he has "jumped with both feet together, without knowing the way out,"—the inability, while finishing the development of one period, to throw forward the view to the next thought, the link to connect it with that which is to follow,—when we think, too, that any or all of these embarrassments may occur to him while all eyes are concentrated upon him, watching his every look and gesture,—it seems wonderful that any man,—above all, that a man with so extreme a sensibility as the orator must have,—should dare to face an assembly.

Even years of practice in public speaking do not always extinguish the timidity which is felt in confronting an

assemblage of listeners. Cicero, notwithstanding his long experience in oratory, does not heaitate to make this confession; "I declare that when I think of the moment when I shall have to rise and speak in defence of a client, I am not only disturbed in mind, but tremble in every limb of my body." We are told by some of the ancient writers that he began his speeches in a low, quivering voice, just like a schoolboy afraid of not saying his lesson perfectly enough to escape whipping. According to Plutarch, he scarcely left off trembling and quivering even when he had got thoroughly into the current and substance of his speech. This may have been owing to a naturally weak, nervous constitution, to which also we may ascribe the timidity of character which, although on a memorable occasion, he could thunder forth, yet caused him, in the strife of contending factions, painfully to oscillate between his regards for Pompey and his fear of Cæsar. An English reviewer tells of an eminent law-lord, the very model of senatorial and judicial eloquence of the composed and dignified order, who has been seen to tremble, when he rose to address the House of Lords, like a thoroughbred racer when first brought to the starting-post. Even the great reviewer, Jeffrey, once stuck in a speech. Being chosen by the admirers of John Kemble to present him with a snuff-box at a public dinner, Jeffrey, a small man, found himself so overwhelmed and sunk to the earth by the obeisances of the tall tragic god, that he got confused, stopped, and sat down, without even thrusting the box into the actor's hands.

Patrick Henry often hesitated at first, and had the air of labouring under a distressing degree of modesty or timidity, which continued to characterise his manner throughout, unless he was led to throw it off by some great excitement. Dr. Chalmers, though a giant in the pulpit, never was able to speak extempore in a way satisfactorily to himself, though

the cause was not bashfulness, but the overmastering fluency of his mind. Thoughts and words came to his lips in a flood, and thus impeded each other, like water which one attempts to pour all at once out of a narrow-mouthed jug. Lord Macaulay, in a letter to his sister, says of himself: "Nothing but strong excitement and a great occasion overcomes a certain reserve and *mauvaise honte* which I have in public speaking; not a *mauvaise honte* which in the least confuses me or makes me hesitate for a word, but which keeps me from putting any fervour into my tone or my action." If ever a man spoke as if he never knew fear or modesty, it was the late Earl of Derby. Yet he said to Macaulay that he never rose without the greatest uneasiness. "My throat and lips," he said, "when I am going to speak, are as dry as those of a man who is going to be hanged." Tiernay, who was one of the most ready and fluent debaters ever known, made a confession similar to Stanley's. He never spoke, he said, without feeling his knees knock together when he rose. A junior counsel once congratulated Sir William Follett on his perfect composure in prospect of a great case. Sir William asked his friend merely to feel his hand, which was wet with anxiety. A famous parliamentary orator said that his speeches cost him two sleepless nights,—one in which he was thinking what to say, the other in which he was lamenting what he might have said better. Mirabeau, with all his fire, dragged a little at the beginning of his speeches, and was sometimes incoherent; but, gaining momentum as he proceeded, he swept onward at last with resistless power. Like a huge ship which in a dead calm rolls and tosses on the heavy swell, but, as the wind fills its sails, dashes proudly onward, so the great orator rocked on the sea of thought, till, caught by the breath of passion, he moved onward with majestic might and motion.

William Pinkney was one of the haughtiest, most self-

confident, and most vehement of orators; yet, in one of his very latest efforts at the bar, when the occasion had drawn public expectation towards him, his lips were seen to part with their colour, his cheeks to turn pale, and his knees to shake. He often said that he never addressed an audience without some painful and embarrassing emotions at the beginning. As he advanced with his speech, these boyish tremors disappeared, and he became bold, erect, and dictatorial. Gough is said to be still troubled with the stage-fright which he can mimic so well in his lecture upon "Oratory," though he has faced audiences for more than thirty years. Rufus Choate would often, before beginning a jury address, look as restless, nervous, and wretched as a man on the scaffold, momentarily expecting the drop to fall under him. Many speakers who have no fears of a familiar audience, are yet nervous in a new position. We have seen the Governor of a great State, who was perfectly at home on the stump, quake like a schoolboy when standing up before a body of college students whom he had reluctantly consented to address. Lord Eldon once said that he was always a little nervous in speaking at the Goldsmiths' dinner, though he could talk before Parliament with as much indifference as if it were so many cabbage-plants.

Not only courage, but presence of mind, is necessary to him who aspires to address public assemblies. Not only is he liable to a sudden attack of nervousness, or to have his thunder "checked in mid-volley" for want of a word or an illustration, but he may be interrupted by an opponent at the very moment when he is seen to be making his best point; "ugly," insinuating questions may be put to him, for the purpose of disconcerting him; or a concerted effort may be made, by those who dread the effect of his eloquence, to silence him, or, at least, to drown his voice by "oh! oh's!" yawns, mock cheers, coughing, hisses, calls to order, or any of the other devices which disingenuous opponents know so well

how to employ. Erskine was morbidly sensitive to such annoyances; and sometimes his suffering was so keen as absolutely to paralyse his great powers. Dr. Croly, in his "History of the Reign of George III.," states that the smallest appearance of indifference in the great advocate's audience checked the flow of his impetuous oratory, and sometimes silenced his thunder "in mid-volley." Aware of this infirmity, a shrewd opposing attorney would plant a sleepy-headed man beneath the Judge, and directly opposite the place where Erskine was wont to address the jury. Exactly at the moment when the speaker was most impassioned, and, working up a thrilling climax, was making the deepest impression upon the twelve men before him, the sleepy hind would make a hideous grimace, and give way to the utmost expression of weariness. An effective pause would be broken in upon by a fearful yawn; and a splendid peroration would be interrupted by a titter in the second row, and the cry of "silence" from the ushers at the too plain indications of a snore. This would cap the climax of the speaker's misery, and, unable to endure the torture, he would abruptly sit down.

Not only was Erskine thus sensitive touching a lack of attention by his audience, but he was equally distressed by an apparent lack of interest manifested by the counsel associated with him in a cause. Noticing on one occasion the absent or desponding look of Garrow, who had aided him in a cause, he whispered: "Who do you think can get on, with that wet blanket of a face of yours before him?" His first speech in the House of Lords was spoiled by the real or pretended indifference of Pitt, who, after listening a few minutes, and taking a note or two as if intending to reply, dashed pen and paper upon the floor with a contemptuous smile. Erskine, it is said, never recovered from this expression of disdain; "his voice faltered, he struggled through the remainder of his speech, and sank into his seat dispirited and

shorn of his fame." On another occasion, Pitt rose after Erskine and began: "I rise to reply to the right honourable gentleman (Fox) who spoke last but one. As for the honourable and learned gentleman who spoke last, he did no more than regularly repeat what fell from the gentleman who preceded him, and as regularly weaken what he repeated." Addison tells an amusing anecdote of a counsellor whom he knew, in Westminster Hall, who never pleaded without a piece of packthread in his hand, which he used to twist about a thumb or a finger all the while he was speaking; the wags of the day called it "the thread of his discourse," because he could not utter a word without it. "One of his clients, who was more merry than wise, stole it from him one day in the midst of his pleading; but he had better have let it alone, for he lost his cause by his jest."

It is said that Daniel Webster once rose to speak by request at a poultry show, when a giant Shanghai got the floor, and burst forth in so defiant and ear-splitting a strain that the orator sat down. It is not every orator, even among the veteran practitioners of the art, who can preserve his self-command in such moments. Few speakers are as ready, when momentarily nonplussed, as Curran was when he was struggling for an illustration of his client's innocence. "It is clear as—as—" (at that moment the sun shone into the court) "clear as yonder sunbeam that now bursts upon us with its splendid coruscations." Not all men have the wit and wisdom of Father Taylor, the famous preacher to sailors in Boston. It is said that once getting involved in a sentence, where clause after clause had been added to each other, and one had branched off in this direction, and another in that, till he was hopelessly entangled, and the starting-point was quite out of sight, he paused, and shook himself free of the perplexity, by saying: "Brethren, I don't exactly know where I went *in*, in beginning this sentence, and I don't

in the least know where I'm coming out; but one thing I *do* know, I'M BOUND FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN!" So he "took a new departure, and left the broken-backed centipede of a sentence lying where it might, in the track behind him." Even *he*, however, was nonplussed once. He had vividly depicted an impenitent sinner, under the figure of a storm-tossed vessel, bowing under the hurricane, every bit of canvas torn from its spars, and driving madly towards the rock-bound coast of Cape Ann. "And how," he cried despairingly, at the climax of his skilfully-elaborated metaphor, "oh! *how* shall the poor sinner be saved?" At this moment an old salt in the gallery, who had hung spell-bound on the orator's lips, his whole soul absorbed in the scene, could restrain himself no longer, and, springing to his feet, he screamed,—"Let him put his helm hard down, and *bear away for Squam!*"

It is related of the witty Scotch advocate, Harry Erskine, that once, when pleading in London before the House of Lords, he had occasion to speak of certain *curators*, and pronounced the word as in Scotland, with the accent on the first syllable, *cu*rators. One of the English judges could not stand this, and cried out, "We are in the habit of saying cu*ra*tor in this country, Mr. Erskine, following the analogy of the Latin language, in which, as you are aware, the penultimate syllable is long." "I thank your lordship very much," was Erskine's reply; "we are weak enough in Scotland to think that in pronouncing the word *cu*rator, we follow the analogy of the English language. But I need scarcely say that I bow with pleasure to the opinion of so learned a sena*to*r and so great an ora*to*r as your lordship."

Burke, in his early days, before his brain had been unhinged by the French Revolution, was sometimes ready and happy in his retorts. Attacking Lord North in one of his speeches, for demanding further supplies amid the most

lavish expenditure, he quoted a saying of Cicero: "Magnum vectigal est parsimonia," accenting *vectigal* on the first syllable. Lord North, who was a fine classical scholar, cried out, impatiently, from the Treasury Bench, "*vectīgal, vectīgal!*" "I thank the right honourable gentleman," retorted Burke, "for his correction; and, that he may enjoy the benefit of it, I repeat the words: 'Magnum vectīgal est parsimonia.'" At a later period of his life he lost his self-command, and by his irritability of temper was placed at a great disadvantage in the "wars of the giants." A policy of systematic insult was employed by some of his enemies in the House of Commons, to put him down. "Muzzling the lion" was the term applied to this treatment of the greatest political philosopher of the age. Coughing, ironical cheers, affected laughter, assailed him when he arose to speak, which, though he generally disdained to notice them at the time, nevertheless soured his temper, and sometimes paralysed his tongue. George Selwyn states that on one occasion Burke had just arisen in the House, with some papers in his hand, on the subject of which he intended to make a motion, when a rough-hewn country member, who had no taste for his magnificent harangues, started up and said: "Mr. Speaker, I hope the honourable gentleman does not mean to read that large bundle of papers, and to bore us with a long speech into the bargain." Burke was so suffocated with rage as to be incapable of speech, and rushed out of the House. "Never before," says Selwyn, "did I see the fable realised of *a lion put to flight by the braying of an ass.*"

There are orators who have so perfect a self-command that hardly anything short of an earthquake can disturb it. They seem to hold their passions in control by the turning of a peg, as did the rider of the Tartar horse of the fairy tale, which at one moment dashed through the air at the rate of a thousand furlongs an hour, and the next stood as motionless

as the Caucasus. There are others to whom interruptions and attempts to check the impetuous flow of their speech, appear to be positive blessings. Taunts, sneers, hisses, which ruffle and confuse less fiery spirits, only put them upon their mettle, stimulate them, and call forth their latent powers. Like a mountain stream which has been dammed, the swelling flood of their eloquence acquires increased fury from resistance, and bursting through all its restraints, overwhelms everything in its path. Such an orator was Lord Chatham. While on the one hand he often, by the power of his eye, cowed down an antagonist in the midst of his speech, and threw him into utter confusion by a single glance of scorn or contempt, he himself was only aroused by opposition. Any attempt to impede him in the utterance of offensive words only called forth a more vigorous repetition of the offence. Some of his most brilliant oratorical successes originated at moments of overbearing impatience, when he was infringing on the rules of debate. Murray (afterwards Lord Mansfield), on the other hand, was greatly wanting in nerve, and though the ablest man, as well as the ablest debater, in the House of Commons, according to Lord Waldegrave, bore in agitated silence the assaults of Pitt (afterwards Lord Chatham), to which he did not dare to reply. Butler states, in his "Reminiscences," that on one occasion, after Murray had suffered for some time, Pitt stopped, threw his eyes around, then fixing their whole power on his opponent, said: "I must now address a few words to Mr. Solicitor: they shall be few, but they shall be daggers." Murray was agitated; the look was continued; the agitation increased. "Felix trembles," exclaimed Pitt: "he shall hear me some other day." He sat down; Murray made no reply, and a languid debate is said to have shown the paralysis of the House.

Mirabeau, who in physical gifts strongly resembled Chatham, owed likewise many of his oratorical triumphs to

opposition. It has been justly said that in retort, in that kind of abrupt, indignant, disdainful repartee which crushes its victim as by a blow, he was, like Chatham, surpassed by none of his contemporaries, and, like Chatham, too, he was peculiarly dexterous in converting a taunt into a victorious rebuke. Patrick Henry, even in his most fiery moments, equally retained his self-possession. His coolness under trying circumstances, when speaking against the Stamp Act in the Virginia House of Burgesses, is familiar to all Americans. As he uttered the celebrated passage: "Cæsar had his Brutus,—Charles the First his Cromwell,—and George the Third"—the cry of "Treason!" was heard from the Speaker, and "Treason, treason!" was echoed from every part of the House. "It was one of those trying moments," says Mr. Wirt, Henry's biographer, "which are decisive of character. Henry faltered not for an instant; but rising to a loftier attitude, and fixing on the Speaker an eye of the most determined fire, he finished his sentence with the firmest emphasis,—'*may profit by their example.* If this be treason, make the most of it.'" One of the neatest retorts ever made by a public speaker, was that made by Coleridge to some marks of disapprobation during his democratic lectures at Bristol: "I am not at all surprised that, when the red-hot prejudices of aristocrats are suddenly plunged into the cool element of reason, they should go off with a *hiss.*" But happy as was this reply, it was surpassed in overwhelming effect by a somewhat irreverent one made by that brilliant but erratic orator, the late Thomas Marshall, of Kentucky. Towards the close of his life, when, unfortunately, his oratorical inspiration was too often artificial, he was making a speech to a crowded audience at Buffalo, when he was interrupted by a political opponent, who, pretending not to hear distinctly, tried to embarrass him by putting his hand to his ear and crying out "Louder!" Mr. Marshall, thereupon, pitched his

voice several times on a higher and yet higher key; but the only effect on his tormentor was to draw forth a still more energetic cry of "Louder! please, sir, louder!" At last, being interrupted for the fourth time and in the midst of one of his most thrilling appeals, Mr. Marshall, indignant at the trick, as he now discovered it to be, paused for a moment, and fixing his eye first on his enemy and then on the presiding officer, said: "Mr. President, on the last day, when the angel Gabriel shall have descended from the heavens, and, placing one foot upon the sea and the other upon the land, shall lift to his lips the golden trumpet, and proclaim to the living and to the resurrected dead that time shall be no more, I have no doubt, sir, that some infernal fool from Buffalo will start up and cry out, '*Louder, please, sir, louder!*'"

In this account of the orator's trials we have mentioned only some of the most obvious ones. We have said nothing of the ever-varying moods of feeling to which a person of so much sensibility is inevitably subject, and which make him more or less the puppet of circumstances. There are moments when he feels himself in quick electrical sympathy with his audience, and every breath and current of thought and feeling by which it is affected, sweeps through his own soul,—when he feels a stream of mental influence from every person that he addresses, as potent and stimulating as if they were all so many galvanic batteries, with their wires of communication concentrating in his own bosom. There are other times when he feels himself so repelled and chilled by the cold, stern gaze of the faces before him, that all his faculties are benumbed. There are moments of inspiration when he feels a kind of divine afflatus, and, instead of making an effort to speak, he seems to be spoken from; his soul is so flooded with emotion, that he seems to be lifted off his feet, and to tread on air. He speaks at such times in a kind of ecstasy

or rapture, and hours may pass without any consciousness of fatigue. There are other moments when his thoughts and ideas, instead of flowing apparently from an inexhaustible fountain, can only be pumped up with great effort; when expression and illustration, instead of flocking to his lips, seem to fly from them. Again, how often when he has carefully prepared a speech, does he have to wait for an opportunity to deliver it, till the fire and glow that attended its preparation have become extinct! How often do the happiest ideas and illustrations flash upon him after he has sat down! He could pulverise his adversary were the debate to be repeated, but his crushing arguments have presented themselves too late. William Wirt had once an afflicting experience of this kind, which, with others that might be cited, tends to show that oratorical victories are due to sudden inspirations, to opportunity or luck, as often as victories in the field. "Had the cause been to argue over again on the next day," he wrote to a friend, after having grappled with Pinkney, "I could have shivered him, for his discussion revived all my forgotten topics, and, as I lay in my bed on the following morning, arguments poured themselves out before me as a cornucopia. I should have wept at the consideration of what I had lost, if I had not prevented it by leaping out of bed, and beginning to sing and dance like a maniac."

It will be seen by these examples that there are occasions when courage, coolness, presence of mind, and promptness of decision are required of the orator as truly as of the general on the field of battle. Especially does he require them on field-days, in parliamentary duellos, in the hand-to-hand encounter of intellects, where the home thrust is often so suddenly given. At such times, it is not enough to be endowed with the rarest intellectual gifts, unless he is able to command his whole intellectual force the moment he

wants to use it. We believe, therefore, that there is n grander manifestation of the power of the human mind, tha that of an orator launched suddenly, without warning, on th ocean of improvisation, and spreading his sails to the breeze coolly yet instantaneously deciding upon his course, an earnestly and even passionately pursuing it; at the sam moment guiding his bark amid the rocks and quicksands on th way, and forecasting his future course; now seemingly over whelmed in a storm of interruption, yet rising stronger fror opposition; now suddenly collecting his forces in an interva of applause, battling with and conquering both himself an his audience, and mounting triumphantly billow after billow until with his auditory he reaches the haven on which hi longing eye has been fixed.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ORATOR'S HELPS.

As language is the orator's principal instrument of conviction and persuasion, it is evident that a perfect command of it is absolutely indispensable to the highest success. It is evident, too, that such a command does not come by instinct or inspiration, but must be gained by dint of study and painstaking. The power of speaking in clear, vigorous, racy, picturesque, and musical English,—of employing the "aptest words in the aptest places,"—demands of him who would possess himself of it, as careful and persistent culture as that of sounding the depths of metaphysics, or of solving the toughest mathematical problems. But how shall this power be acquired? We answer, partly by the constant practice of composition with the pen (of which we shall speak more at length further on), and partly in two other ways,—viz., by reading and translation. Next in value to the frequent use of the pen, is the practice of carefully reading and re-reading the best prose writers and poets, and committing their finest passages to memory, so as to be able to repeat them at any moment without effort. The advantages of this practice are that it not only strengthens the memory, but fills and fertilises the mind with pregnant and suggestive thoughts expressed in the happiest language, stores it with graceful images, and, above all, forms the ear to the rhythm and number of the period, which add so much to its impressiveness and force.

If we study the masterpieces of eloquence we shall find that it is in a large measure to the rhythmus, the harmony of the sentences, that many of the most striking passages owe their effect. The ancient orators paid especial attention to this point. They bestowed incredible pains not only upon

the choice of words, but upon their metrical arrangement, so that they might fall most pleasingly upon the ear. Cicero quotes half-a-dozen words from a speech of Carbo, which were so exquisitely selected and collocated that they almost brought his hearers to their feet. It may be thought that so much attention to form may distract the speaker from proper attention to the substance of his discourse, and tempt him to sacrifice sense to sound; and such, indeed, was the effect in the times that succeeded the dissolution of the Roman Republic. Quintilian states that it was the ridiculous boast of certain orators in the days of the declension of genuine eloquence, that their harangues were capable of *being set to music*, and sung upon the stage. So far was this affectation carried by the younger Gracchus, that when he harangued the populace, he used to employ a skilful flute-player, to stand behind him in a position where he could not be observed, and, by the tones of his instrument, regulate the proper pitch of his voice! It was this depravity of taste which gave rise to what Tacitus calls "the very indecent and preposterous, though very frequent expression," that such an orator speaks *smoothly*, and that such a dancer moves *eloquently*. But the abuse of an art is no argument against its use. The example of the Prince of Orators shows that, in cultivating the form, we need not separate it from the substance; that this is not true art, but the want of art, since for true art the most perfect form is nothing less than the clearest and most transparent appearance of the substance.

It is the melody of a sentence which, so to speak, makes it cut,—which gives it speedy entrance into the mind, causes it to penetrate deeply, and to exercise a magic power over the heart. It is not enough that the speaker's utterances impress the mind of the hearer; they should ring in his ears; they should appeal to the senses, as well as to the feelings, the imagination, and the intellect; then, when they

seize at once on the whole man, on body, soul, and spirit, will they "swell in the heart, and kindle in the eyes," and constrain him, he knows not why, to believe and to obey. Let the student of oratory, then, brood over the finest passages of English composition, both prose and poetry, in his leisure hours, till his mind is surcharged with them; let him read and re-read the ever-varied verse of Shakspeare, the majestic and pregnant lines of Milton, the harmonious and cadenced compositions of Bolingbroke, Grattan, Erskine, Curran, and Robert Hall. Let him dwell upon these passages and recite them till they almost seem his own,—and insensibly, without effort, he will "form to theirs the relish of his soul," and will find himself adopting their language, and imitating them instinctively through a natural love for the beautiful, and the strong desire which every one feels to reproduce what is pleasing to him. By this process he will have prepared in his mind, so to speak, a variety of oratorical moulds, of the most exquisite shape and pattern, into which the stream of thought, flowing red-hot and molten, from a mind glowing with the fire of declamation, will become fixed, as metal in a foundry takes the form of a noble or beautiful statue.

Will it be said that oratory turns aside from its purpose when it seeks to please, instead of to convince and persuade; and that the metrical arrangement of words, which is one of the principal charms of poetry, is unfit for prose? We answer that prose has its music, its characteristic melody, as well as poetry, though of a different kind; not that of the lyre or the lute, which easily "weds itself to immortal verse," but a wild and free, an ever-pleasant, though ever-varying music, like that of Nature. It is a music like that of the sobbing seas, or of the whispering winds and falling waters, the wild music which is heard by mountain streams or in the leafy woods of summer. The most perfect prose composition, while it will be devoid of the complex harmony of verse, and of everything

that may suggest the idea of rhyme, will yet no less than poetry have its gentle and equable, its impetuous and rapid flow; it will take the ear prisoner by its full and majestic harmonies and its abrupt transitions, as well as by its impressive pauses, and its grateful, though not regular-recurring cadence. Now since all men, whether educated or uneducated, are so constituted as to enjoy this excellence, which, by giving pleasure, aids the attention, stimulates the memory, and facilitates the admission of argument, who does not see that the orator who fails to avail himself of this aid, neglects one of the most powerful and legitimate instruments of his art?

The practice of storing the mind with choice passages from the best prose writers and poets, and thus flavouring it with the essence of good literature, is one which is commanded both by the best teachers and by the example of some of the most celebrated orators, who have adopted it with signal success. Dr. King, author of "Anecdotes of My Own Time" (published in 1760), states that, in order that his pupils might acquire the art of speaking with correctness and facility, he used to advise them to get by heart a page of some English classic, and the method, he says, was often attended with complete success. Chrysostom did not begin to preach till he had enriched his mind with the spoils of classic learning. William Pitt, in his youth, read the poets, Greek, Latin and English, with the closest attention, and deposited in the cells of his memory many fine passages, which, as we have already seen, he afterwards wove into his speeches in the happiest manner, and with the most telling effect. By his father's advice he read and re-read Barrow's sermons, to secure copiousness of language; and the finest parts of Shakspeare he had by heart. Fox began early to steep his mind in classic literature, and never ceased to linger lovingly over the pages of Homer, Euripides, Virgil,

and Ovid, till the day of his death. He was very fond of the Odyssey, and also of Euripides, who, among the Greek dramatists, seems to have been his favourite. He declares that of all poets this most argumentative dramatist appears to him, "without exception, the most useful for a public speaker." Virgil was the Latin poet whom he most earnestly and fondly studied; and among the Italians, Ariosto, whom he preferred to Tasso, for the luxuriance of his imagery and the grand sweep of his imagination. In giving advice to others, he dwelt with peculiar emphasis on this branch of reading. "I am of opinion," he says, "that the study of good authors, and especially of poets, ought never to be intermitted by any man who is to speak or write for the public, or, indeed, who has any occasion to tax his imagination, whether it be for argument, for illustration, for ornament, for sentiment, or for any other purpose."

Burke's speeches abound with poetical gems, especially from Virgil and Milton. Erskine, who spoke probably the finest and richest English ever uttered by an advocate, devoted himself for two years, before his call to the bar, to the study of literature. He committed a large part of Milton to memory, and so familiarised himself with Shakspeare, that it is said that he could almost, like Porson, have held conversations on all subjects for days together in the phrases of the great English dramatist. It was here that he acquired, not only his rich fund of ideas, but the fine choice of words, the vivid and varied imagery, that distinguished his style. Daniel Webster was a profound student of a few great poets, especially the two just named, and in his reply to Hayne brief passages from both are introduced with signal felicity and effect. William Pinkney owed his intellectual affluence and his polished style to a similar cause. From his youth he made it a rule never to see a fine idea without committing it to memory. Rufus Choate says the result of this practice

was "the most splendid and powerful English *spoken* style I ever heard." Choate himself drunk deep at the fountains not only of science and history, but of philosophy and belles-lettres. To increase his command of language, and to avoid sinking into cheap and bald fluency, as well as to give elevation, energy, sonorousness and refinement to his vocabulary, he read aloud daily, during a large part of his life, a page or more from some fine English author. He was a profound student of words, and made all the realms of literature tributary to his vocabulary. "In literature," he used to say, "you find ideas. There one should daily replenish his stock. The whole range of polite literature should be vexed for thoughts." Literature, again, he contended, was necessary to get intellectual enthusiasm. "All the discipline and customs of social life, in our time, tend to crush emotion and feeling. Literature alone is brimful of feeling."

Bossuet owed the kingly splendour of his style largely to classical studies. The great exemplars of Greece and Rome were always before his eyes. From the freshness and picturesqueness of Homer, the indignant brevity of Tacitus, and the serried strength of Thucydides, he drew that vigour of style, which, when enriched by the sublime imagery of the Prophets and the tender pathos of the Evangelists, placed him among the first of Christian orators. The "Iliad" and "Odyssey" he had thumbed till he knew them nearly all by heart. His passion for Homer, whom he always called "divine," was so great, that he recited his verses in his sleep. It was, however, to the Old Testament, chiefly,—to Isaiah, with his unsurpassed sublimity,—to Jeremiah, with his intense pathos,—to Ezekiel, with his gorgeous colouring,—to Daniel, and the other lyrical poets of the Bible, who have never been surpassed as singers, or as interpreters of the human heart and prophets of the conscience,—that he was chiefly indebted for his inspiration. Fisher Ames was also a

profound student of the Scriptures, especially the Old Testament, with whose ideas and images his mind was deeply imbued,—an example which cannot be too earnestly commended to every public speaker, since the Bible, being at once the most human and the most divine of books, is better fitted than any other to move the common heart of humanity. One of the greatest oratorical successes of Richard Lalor Sheil was achieved at a great popular meeting, by taking the first chapter of Exodus for his theme, and quoting, with the Bible in his hand, "with a solemnity and effect electrical on the sympathies of a religious and enthusiastic people, the words of the inspired writer, and founding on them an impassioned appeal to his countrymen to persevere in their career,—to press onward to the goal appointed for them, heedless of the fears of the timid or the suggestions of the compromising."

Along with the reading of the best and most idiomatic English authors, the practice of translation will also be found invaluable to the young author. It is one of the best keys with which to unlock the treasures of his own tongue. In hunting for fit words for foreign idioms, and felicities of expression to match the felicities of the original, he will be at the same time enriching his vocabulary and taking a lesson in extempore speech. In one respect this practice is preferable to original composition, for it gives a clue to niceties and elegancies of diction which the translator would neither be likely to hit upon himself, nor to find in any English writer, and at the same time it saves him from the servility of being a copyist. He has a model before him, of which he is to catch and reproduce the life and spirit, instead of making a cold and mechanical copy; he paints a similar picture, but with different pigments; and thus his pride of originality is gratified, while he is not compelled to rely on his own narrow resources.

We are aware that there is a growing distaste to-day for the study of the dead languages; but we are persuaded by much experience and observation, that the study is worth all the time and toil it costs, simply on account of the command it gives of language. Who can estimate the facility of expression, to say nothing of the intellectual discipline and the acquisition of new ideas, which must accrue from this constant wrestling with the thoughts of the great writers of antiquity in order to understand and translate them? Could any better or more ingenious contrivance be devised to form an artist in words,—to give one a command of "thought's indispensable tool," language,—than this perpetual comparison of the terms and idioms of two tongues, to discover those that are equivalent; this incessant weighing and measuring of phrases, to find which will give the exact shade, or, at least, the nearest approach to the divine beauty, of the original? Above all, what aptitude for extempore speech must result from this practice, pursued for years, in the decomposition and re-composition of sentences,—of combining and re-combining their separate words in all possible ways, so as to hit upon the arrangement which will at once convey the thought most perfectly, and at the same time give the most exquisite delight to the ear,—and, again, of balancing one sentence against another, in order, by a proper mixture of long ones with short, periodic with loose, to give to the whole that unity, measure and harmony, which will not only render it luminous with meaning, but make it sink deeply and linger long in the mind!

There is no doubt that some of the most eloquent speakers of ancient and modern times have acquired their magical command of words in this way. Cicero thus stocked his vocabulary from the Greek. Lord Chesterfield, one of the most elegant and polished talkers and orators of Europe, translated much both from English into French and from

French into English. Owing in part to this practice, a certain elegance of style became habitual to him, and it would have given him more trouble, he says, to express himself inelegantly than he had ever taken to avoid this defect. Chatham turned and re-turned the pages of Demosthenes into English. William Pitt, his son, translated for years aloud to himself and to his tutor. Following Horace's rule, he read a pretty long passage in the original, and then turned it at once into regular English sentences, aiming to give the ideas with great exactness, and, at the same time, to express himself with idiomatic accuracy and ease, and pausing, when he was at a loss, for the fitting word, until it came. Of course, he had often to stop, at first; but by degrees he acquired a greater mastery and readiness; and in after life he always ascribed to this practice his extraordinary command of language, which enabled him to give every idea its most felicitous expression, and to pour out an unbroken stream of thought, hour after hour, without once hesitating for a word, or recalling a phrase, or sinking for a moment into looseness or inaccuracy in the structure of his sentences. Lord Mansfield, who in his youth had been an enthusiast in classic study, and, in whose brain, according to Cowper,

> "Memory, like the bee that's fed
> From Flora's balmy store,
> The quintessence of all he read
> Had treasured up before,"

turned every one of Cicero's orations into English a second time.

Lord Brougham was an enthusiastic advocate of translation, and also of classic imitation as a help to the orator. In a letter addressed in 1823, at the mature age of forty-four, to Macaulay's father, he says: "I know from experience that nothing is half so successful in these times (bad though they be) as what has been formed on the Greek models. I use a very poor instance in giving my own experience; but I do

assure you that both in courts of law and Parliament, and even to mobs, I have never made so much play (to use a very modern phrase) as when I was almost translating from the Greek. I composed the peroration of my speech for the queen, in the House of Lords, after reading and repeating Demosthenes for three or four weeks, and I composed it twenty times over at least, and it certainly succeeded in a very extraordinary degree, and far above any merits of its own." Rufus Choate, too, was a tireless translator. The culture of expression, he held, should be a specific study, distinct from the invention of thought. Translation should be practised for the double object of keeping fresh in the recollection the words already acquired, and to tax and torment invention and discovery for additional rich and expressive terms. Like Keats and Gautier, he loved words for themselves,—for their look, their aroma, their colour,—and was always on the look-out for the choicest and most picturesque phrases. Tacitus was his chosen author, and, in the busiest days of his ever-busy life, he would always give five minutes, if no more, to his task. One of his chief objects was to stock his memory with synonyms. For every word he translated he would rack his brain and search his books till he had found five or six corresponding English words. He aimed also to enrich his vocabulary with suggestive words,—those that have a spell in them for the memory and imagination. He knew that sometimes even one such word, fitly spoken, has been sufficient to wither an antagonist, or to electrify an audience. "You don't want," said he to a student, "a diction gathered from the newspapers, caught from the air, common and unsuggestive; but you want one whose every word is full freighted with suggestion and association, with beauty and power." Like William Pinkney, he regarded the study of dictionaries as a great fertiliser of language, and spent many hours in conning their pages.

It is hardly necessary to say that one of the best helps to the acquisition of skill in oratory is a profound study of the best specimens of eloquence. As the young painter or sculptor is not content with text-books and lectures, but spends months or years in the galleries of Florence, Rome, and a score of other places, in order to learn how the great masters of form and colour wrought their miracles, so the oratorical student should dissect and analyse the great masterpieces of eloquence, and endeavour, so far as possible, to "pluck out the heart of their mystery,"—to learn the secret of their charm. Let him not confine himself to reading fine passages, such as are to be found in "Selections," "Speakers," and treatises on elocution, for the exclusive reading of these would be misleading, and, on the whole, more injurious than helpful. A speech of the highest order will always contain some of those electric and stimulating qualities which we look for in books of specimens; but the striking metaphor, the startling appeal, the biting sarcasm, the bold invective, the daring apostrophe, which characterise these selected passages, form but an insignificant portion of a long discourse, and sometimes they are wanting altogether to speeches which are models of luminous statement or of powerful and logical reasoning.

The true orator does not strive to be brilliant; he seeks only to convince and persuade,—to secure a client's acquittal, to show the unsoundness of an adversary's principles or reasoning, or to obtain a vote for a certain measure. It has been justly said that it was not with the decorated hilt of his sword that the old knight cleaved in twain the skull of his enemy; nor was it the shining plume on his helmet that protected his own head. Often the pith and marrow of a speech lie in no part which a schoolboy would choose for declamation, but in the exquisite arrangement of its arguments, in the masterly clearness of its statements, in the accrescent energy of its appeals. It was said of Lord Mans-

field, who divided the honours of oratory in the House of Lords with Chatham, that he was "eloquent by his wisdom." He affected no sallies of imagination, or bursts of passion; but secured attention and assent to all he said by his constant good sense, flowing in apt terms and in the clearest method. He excelled, above all, in the statement of a case, arranging the facts in an order so lucid, and with so nice a reference to the conclusions to be founded on them, that the hearer felt inclined to be convinced before he was in possession of the arguments. A writer who often heard George Wood, the leader of the New York Bar some thirty years ago, says that his speech was as plain as that of a Quaker. The thought was as free from the refraction of words as is the light of a planet seen through one of the most complete object-glasses.

Count Montalembert, one of the most brilliant French orators of the present century, was a profound student of British eloquence. He knew almost by heart the principal speeches of the great orators of England and Ireland, and in his youth was wont to relate with impassioned ardour the Parliamentary debates to his schoolmates. The fiery Grattan, and the splendid contest which he maintained against the Parliamentary union of England and Ireland, held a conspicuous place in his glowing pictures. But above all, Burke was the hero of his idolatry, and the portrait of the great Irishman hung in the Count's study till the last day of his life. The speeches against the American War and Warren Hastings,—and even those in which Burke vehemently denounced the French Revolution, were all analysed or repeated by Montalembert to an admiring and electrified audience.

Again, besides studying the masterpieces of eloquence in print, the oratorical aspirant should listen to the best living speakers. As the young bird, that is learning to fly, watches

its parents, and with its eyes fixed on them, spreads its unsteady wings, follows in their path, and copies their motions, so the young man who would master the art of oratory, should watch closely the veteran practitioners of the art, and assiduously note and imitate their best methods, till, gaining confidence in the strength of his pinions, he may venture to cease circling about his nest, and boldly essay the eagle flights of eloquence. It was thus, in part, that Grattan's oratorical genius was trained and directed. Going in his youth to London, he was attracted to the debates in Parliament by the eloquence of Lord Chatham, which acted with such a spell upon his mind as henceforth to fix his destiny. To emulate the fervid and electric oratory of that great leader, reproducing his lofty conceptions in new and original forms,—for he was no servile copyist,—was henceforth the object of his greatest efforts and of his most fervent aspirations. The genius of Rufus Choate, original and distinctive as it unquestionably was, was fired in a great degree by listening, when he was a law-student at Washington, to the fervid eloquence of William Pinkney, whom he not a little resembled.

Among all the helps of the orator, there is no auxiliary which he may employ with greater advantage than the pen. Cicero says that in writing on a subject we give more than usual attention to it, and thus many things are suggested to us of which we should otherwise never have thought. We choose the best words, and arrange them in the best order, and a habit is thus formed of employing always the best language; so that as a boat, when the rowers rest upon their oars, will continue to move by the impulse previously given, so a speaker who has been accustomed to use his pen, will, when he is obliged to utter anything extempore, be apt to do it with the same grace and finish as if it had been previously composed. There can be no doubt that the frequent use of

the pen helps to give not only clearness and precision, but force and vividness, to the speaker's thought. In this way, and in this way only, can the speaker acquire and perpetuate that command and general accuracy of language,—that copiousness in the diction, precision in the selection of terms, and close articulation in the construction,—which alone can insure the highest excellence. By this means he will not only make luminous ideas which, when shut up in the mind, are apt to preserve a certain haziness, but he will open richer veins of thought, and, above all, will be able to lay up in his memory a supply of weapons ready for any emergency. Important sentences and passages thus carefully wrought out beforehand in the laboratory of thought, can hardly fail, even if not delivered exactly *verbatim*, of being more effective ordinarily than those which are thrown off hastily in the hurry of debate, when there is no time to grope about for the most apt and telling words, and the expression must be effected at the first stroke.

In thus commending the use of the pen, we would not counsel a speaker, except in the case of a eulogy or other formal address, to write out the whole of a speech, and "learn it by heart," even to every little beggarly particle. No doubt there have been orators who have done this with considerable success. Edward Everett adopted this method; but though years of practice and an unfailing memory enabled him to give many passages of what he had thus "conned and learned by rote," in the free, off-hand manner of impromptu address, yet there was always visible, even in his happiest efforts, a certain air of constraint and artificiality. It was rarely that the most impassioned burst of oratory was delivered with such a perfection of concealed art, as not to excite a suspicion in the hearer's mind that, like Sheridan's cut and dry exclamation of "Good God! Mr. Speaker," it had been carefully studied beforehand. But

if this master of memorised speech did not succeed in cheating his hearers, still more signal has been the failure of his disciples, most of whom have succeeded only in reproducing his frigidity and monotonous elegance, without being able to impart to their recitations the air of sudden suggestion which he was occasionally so fortunate as to command. Tacitus says, truly and tersely, as translated by William Pitt, "It is with eloquence as with a flame. It requires fuel to feed it, motion to excite it, and *it brightens as it burns.*" The practice of memoriter speaking has, unquestionably, some advantages, and the fact that it was the favourite method of the ancient orators goes far to commend it. If the speaker has a tenacious memory, and can commit a speech rapidly, he is relieved of all anxiety about his thought and style, and is left free to throw all his force into the proper work of delivery. Having the whole speech in his mind, he knows the relations of the several parts to each other, and is thus "able to graduate the degrees of force, pitch, and rapidity of movement appropriately to every part; to return to the key-note and initial movement as often as he may be required, and to manage his pauses and transitions so as to produce their true and proper effect." On the other hand, speaking from memory, in most cases, not only involves a great amount of disagreeable drudgery, and almost necessitates a break-down when, from interruption or sudden nervousness, a passage which forms a necessary link in the chain is forgotten, but it prevents the speaker from feeling the pulse of his audience, catching inspiration from their looks or applause, meeting objections with which he is interrupted, and varying his address with the varying exigencies of the hour.

But while speeches should not, except in rare cases, be written out and memorised entire, yet important passages, we think, should be; and, in every case where one is to speak on an important occasion, he should make himself so com-

pletely master of his theme by patient thought and frequent use of the pen, that the substance and the method, the matter and the order, of his ideas shall be perfectly familiar to him. Nor is it enough that he possess himself of sharply defined thoughts, and the precise order of their delivery; he must brood over them hour by hour till "the fire burns" and the mind glows with them,—till not only the arguments and illustrations have been supplied to the memory, but the most felicitous terms, the most vivid, pregnant, and salient phrases, have been suggested, which he will recall, to an extent that will surprise him, by the matter in which they are imbedded, and with which they are connected by the laws of association. Proceeding in this way, he will unite, in a great measure, the advantages of the written and the spoken styles. Avoiding the miserable bondage of the speaker who servilely adheres to manuscript,—a procedure which produces, where the effort of memory has not been perfect, a feeling of constraint and frigidity in the delivery, and, where it has been perfect, an appearance of artificiality in the composition,—he will weave into his discourse the passages which he has polished to the last degree of art, and he will introduce also anything that occurs during the inspiration of delivery. He will have all the electrical power, the freshness, fire, and fervour of the orator who does not write, and at the same time much of the condensation, elegance, and exquisite finish of him who coins his phrases in the deliberation of his study.

There is no doubt that, in point of fact, almost every great orator writes passages which he commits to memory. Sheridan prepared his impromptus beforehand to an extent which seems incredible to one not familiar with his habits. Indeed, one of the chief defects of his speeches was the transition from his carefully-conned declamation to his extempore statements being perceptible to everybody. As he was unable to keep for an instant on the wing, there was no gradation,

and he suddenly dropped from tropes and rhetoric into a style that was strangely bald and lax. One of the secrets of Canning's elegance and polish of style was his constant practice of writing in conjunction with extemporaneous speech. On every important debate "he wrote much beforehand, and composed more in his mind, which flowed forth spontaneously, and mingled with the current of his thoughts, in all the fervour of the most prolonged and excited discussion. Hence while he had great ease and variety, he never fell into that negligence and looseness of style which we always find in a purely extemporaneous speaker." Many of Curran's winged passages, which seemed born of the inspiration of the moment, were elaborated in the closet. Like Canning, he dovetailed them so skilfully with the others as to make them appear impromptu. "My dear fellow," said he to Phillips, "the day of inspiration has gone by. Everything I ever said, which was worth remembering,—my *de bene esses*, my white horses, as I call them,—were all carefully prepared." Some of the most electric passages of Brougham's speeches were written and rewritten again and again. Indeed, he expressly declares that the perfection of public speaking consists in introducing a prepared passage with effect. "It is worthy of note," he says, "for the use of the student in rhetoric, that Erskine wrote down word for word the passage about the savage and his bundle of sticks. His mind having acquired a certain excitement and elevation, and received an impetus from the tone and quality of the matured and premeditated composition, retained that impetus after the impelling cause had died away."

The practice of Plunket, so far as it went, was admirable; he used, it is said, to prepare a few keen, epigrammatic, or passionate sentences, in which to concentrate the effect of extemporaneous passages that led up to them. Sheil, who spoke always with an air of passion and abandonment which

nothing, apparently, but the enthusiasm of the moment could inspire, elaborated the great passages of his speeches with the utmost nicety and finish. They were hewn, chiselled, and polished with all the tender care of a sculptor, rehearsed with all their possible effects, and kept in reserve till the critical moment when, by contrast with other parts, they would shine forth most resplendently. Montalembert polished and re-polished some parts of his orations, which seemed impromptu, with ceaseless care. Bossuet, on the other hand, disliked writing, which only distracted him. He dashed down rapidly on paper, texts, citations, and arguments suitable to the theme and the occasion; meditated deeply on this rough document, in the morning of the day he was to preach; and thus developing his discourse in his mind, he passed mentally through his sermon two or three times, reading the paper before him, and altering and improving, as though the whole had been written. A famous lecturer used to say of his practice that the main body of his addresses was in the language of the moment, but that "special howls" were carefully prepared.

Macaulay is said to have declared that he dared not write a speech that he was to deliver, on account of the danger of falling into the style of an essay, which he deemed altogether unfit for a public speech. It is notorious, however, that in his parliamentary efforts he generally "talked like a book;" and, indeed, some of his speeches are but reproductions of his masterly essays. His speech in 1830, on the Civil Disabilities of the Jews, is the legitimate offspring of the Essay of 1829. That in early life he sometimes wrote and conned his eloquent periods is evident from the following incident related in an English work published about twenty years ago: At the annual anti-slavery meeting in 1826, Mr. Macaulay delivered the first of the brilliant orations which gave him fame as a public speaker. At its close a gentleman asked him to

furnish a report of it for the London "Morning Chronicle," saying that he spoke so rapidly, and the excellence of the speech depended so much on the collocation of the words, that only its author could do it justice in a report. At first, Mr. Macaulay hesitated; but, on being pressed, said that he would think of it. On going to the office of the "Chronicle" in the evening, the writer found, he says, a large packet containing a *verbatim* report of the speech as spoken. The brilliant passages were marked in pencil, and the whole manuscript had been evidently well thumbed over,—showing that no schoolboy had ever more laboriously and faithfully committed to memory his speech in "Enfield's Speaker," than had the great historian of the age "learned by heart" his first public oration. As he advanced in years, this habit grew upon him so strongly, that at last it was a positive pain and embarrassment to him to be called upon to speak even a dozen sentences off-hand. Long and careful preparation was essential to him; and, even with preparation, he was nervous, anxious, uneasy, until he had poured out his cogitations. "On the nights, too, on which he intended to speak, a child might have discerned the fact. He sat with his arms crossed; his head was frequently thrown back, as if he were attentively surveying the roof; and though the Speaker of the House of Commons was a perfectly impartial man, and filled his office to the satisfaction of every member, one could scarcely doubt that he often relieved a poet and an orator from his uneasiness by naming Mr. Macaulay at an early period of the evening.

We have heard from the lips of the late Judge Story a similar and more striking anecdote of the celebrated American advocate, William Pinkney. Though a consummate master of the arts of extempore speaking, he often wrote out the principal parts of his speeches, in order to preserve a correct and polished diction. He believed, with the great orators

of antiquity, that this practice is absolutely necessary, if one would acquire and preserve a style at once correct and graceful in public speaking, which otherwise is apt to degenerate into colloquial negligence and tedious verbosity. Alexander Hamilton, in a great libel cause which he argued, wrote out his argument the night before, and then tore it up. "Always prepare, investigate, compose a speech," said Rufus Choate to a student, "pen in hand. Webster always wrote when he could get a chance." The reasons which Mr. Choate assigned for his practice, were that only in this way can a speaker be sure that he had got to the bottom of his subject, or have the confidence and ease flowing from the certainty that he cannot break down. The written matter, he added, "must be well memorised." He himself acted on this rule. In the court-room he always spoke before a pile of manuscript, covered with his cabalistic "pot-hooks," to which, however, he only occasionally referred. The night before addressing a jury, he would sometimes write all night. It is hardly necessary to say that in all cases where carefully finished passages are introduced into an extempore speech, it is a part of the speaker's art, and one that requires the nicest skill, to blend the impromptu and the prepared parts into an indistinguishable whole. Any clumsiness that betrays the joints,—that reveals the secret of the "purple patches,"—will destroy the charm. In his journal, May, 1843, Mr. Choate wrote: "I am not to forget that I am, and must be, if I would live, a student of forensic rhetoric. . . . A wide and anxious survey of that art and that science teaches me that careful, constant writing is the parent of ripe speech. It has no other. But that writing must always be rhetorical writing,—that is, such as might in some parts of some speech be uttered to a listening audience. *It is to be composed as in and for the presence of an audience.* So it is to be intelligible, perspicuous, pointed, terse, with image, epithet, turn, advanc-

ing and impulsive, full of *generalisations*, *maxims*, illustrating the saying of the wise." In every part of study, Mr. Choate relied greatly on the pen, which he regarded as the corrector of vagueness of thought and expression. "In translating," says Mr. E. G. Parker, in his "Reminiscences," "in mastering a difficult book, in preparing his arguments, in collecting his evidence, he was always armed with that, to him, potent weapon." The Right Hon. W. G. Hamilton, in his "Parliamentary Logic," advises the speaker, who would conceal his art in such cases, to connect the elaborated part of his speech with what has incidentally fallen in debate; "when you come to that premeditated and finest part, hesitate and appear to boggle; catch at some expression that shall fall short of your idea, and then seem to hit at last upon the true thing. This has always an extraordinary effect, and gives the air of extempore genius to what you say." Lord Brougham appears to have acted, at times, with imperfect success, on a hint like this. "When he seemed to pause in search of thoughts or words," says Lord Granville, "we knew that he had a sentence ready cut and dried."

It may be objected,—indeed, it often has been objected to speeches thus carefully prepared,—that they are too elaborate; that they are likely to lack naturalness and simplicity; that, in short, they smell of the midnight oil. If such, in any case, is the effect of preparation,—if the orator, in the effort to perfect his speech, is tempted to aim merely at tickling the ear, and he thus, by introducing beauties of thought or expression which have no relation to the subject, and no tendency to facilitate its comprehension, draws attention not to his theme but to himself or his rhetorical skill,—the objection is, indeed, fatal. The best style, written or spoken, is not like a painted window which transmits the light of day tinged with a hundred hues, and diverts the attention from its proper use to the pomp and splendour of

the artist's doing; it is a transparent, colourless medium, which simply lets the thought be seen, without suggesting a thought about the medium itself. But if the elaboration, however great, be for legitimate ends,—if the energy and harmony, the vivid images, the "apt words in apt places," which result from it, aid attention, and facilitate the admission of argument, at the same time that they delight the hearer, the delight being aimed at only for an ulterior and higher purpose,—then it is hardly possible for the speaker to take too much pains. The utmost elaboration of this kind is not only pardonable but praiseworthy. Naturalness and simplicity, the last and most excellent graces which can belong to a speaker, so far from being opposed to it, can be obtained in no other way. The utmost art,—art in the sense of a deliberate effort to adapt the means to the ends, and to do what is to be done in the most perfect manner,—is here the truest nature.

If the Prince of Orators, instead of trusting to impromptu inspiration, was indefatigable in his efforts to prepare himself for his public discourses, shall a modern speaker, of inferior powers, be forbidden to do so? That Demosthenes *could* speak extemporaneously, is well known; but it is equally well known that he never did so when he could help it; and so diligent was his preparation, that the very objection we are considering was urged by his enemies against his oratory,—that it smelt of the lamp. Regarding oratory as an art, and as an art in which proficiency can come only by intense labour, he left nothing to chance which he could secure by forethought and skill,—nothing to the inspiration of the moment, which deliberate industry could make certain. He knew, doubtless, what every great speaker,—what every writer,

"They came to him too naturally not to have been studied," says George Sand of the vehement words of one of her heroes.

indeed,—knows perfectly well, that even the so-called flashes of inspiration are the reward, not of the indolent man, but of him who is usually most laborious in his preparation. It is *after* such preparation, due rest having meanwhile been taken, that, as it has been happily said, the most unlooked-for felicities, the happiest thoughts and expressions, often suddenly flash into unbidden existence under the glow of speaking,—felicities of which, while in the act of preparation, the mind may never have caught a glimpse. But then this happy excitement, this exaltation of all the faculties, is only possible to the mind when prolonged preparation has suggested all the trains of thought *likely* to stimulate emotion, and has already in part stimulated it; and, above all, has insured that self-possession in the treatment of the subject without which the boasted "inspiration" never visits, or is likely to visit, the most eloquent speaker. "It is preparation which piles the wood, and lays the sacrifice, and then the celestial fire may perchance descend. The entire water in the vessel must have its whole temperature slowly raised to the boiling-point; and then, and not till then, it 'flashes into steam.'" The habit of careful and laborious preparation will no more rob the orator of his fervour than faithful drilling robs the soldier of his fire. It is not the raw volunteer, but the soldier who has practised the exercises of the parade-ground, that will do best in the fight; and we may add, too, that the sentences which have been carefully knit together in the closet will often transmit the glow of passion as the solid and well-trained phalanx burns with martial fire, and hurls itself like a thunderbolt upon the enemy.

The question has been asked: Why is it that men who have ranked high as writers, have so often miserably failed as speakers? Why is it that they who may be said on paper to roar you in the ears of the groundlings an 'twere any lion, aggravate their voice on the platform like a sucking dove?

Examples of this are so numerous that they will suggest themselves to every reader. Addison and Gibbon attempted oratory in the British Senate only to "fall flat and shame their worshippers." The latter tells us that the bad speakers filled him with apprehension, the good ones with despair. Sir Philip Francis, who was so ready and powerful with the pen, was hesitating and unready in speech. Pope was tongue-tied in a large company, and Irving was dumb at dinners given in his honour. When Béranger was elected to the National Assembly of France, he sat one day under protest, and refused to go again. With the grace of La Fontaine and the philosophic wit of Voltaire, he was as shy as Dominie Sampson, and declared in a letter to the press from his garret, that to address more than six persons was beyond his power. Cicero was an exception to the rule, and so in modern times have been a few men in England and France; but the instances are too few to invalidate it. "Sir James Mackintosh," says Macaulay, "spoke essays, Mr. Fox wrote debates; his history reads like a powerful reply thundered from the front Opposition-bench at three in the morning." This statement gives, we think, even too favourable an impression of Mr. Fox's abilities as a writer. So far is he from writing with power, that all the fire of his genius seems to be extinguished when he takes up his pen, and we can with difficulty believe that the fervid orator who delivered the speech on the Westminster Scrutiny is the same man who wrote the History of the Reign of James II.

Bolingbroke both wrote and spoke well; but graceful and flowing as is his written style, it is not free from the faults which we are apt to find in the compositions of one who declaims on paper. Always vivid and animated, it sometimes tires the reader with repetitions and amplifications to which, when set off by his fine person and pleasing intonations, an audience might listen with profit and delight. Brougham

was one of the giants of the senate; but he wrote as if he were speaking from the woolsack, and his big words and labyrinthine sentences violated the first laws of literary composition. Dr. Johnson wanted to try his hand in the House of Commons; but though he declared public speaking to be a mere knack, it is possible that the very qualities which made him the monarch of the club-room, and gave him such power with the pen, would have prevented his success as an orator. A succession of vivid, pointed, epigrammatic sentences, which have a telling effect in the pauses or quick turns of conversation, do not make a speech. Horne Tooke failed in the House of Commons, in spite of his tact, talent, self-possession, and long practice at the hustings. Even Mr. Gladstone is no exception to the rule. "Too subtle a thinker and too conscientious a mind to attain the highest kind of oratory, the object of which is to persuade by carrying, as it were by storm, the feelings and the passions of the audience, he is yet clear, pointed, and vigorous in debate; but, on the other hand, no one can deny that he is an obscure and intricate writer. He seems graceful as a swan on the waters of Parliamentary strife; but when he takes up his pen, he is like the same when it leaves its native element and waddles awkwardly on the ground."

The explanation of this phenomenon is not difficult. A moment's reflection will show us that the writer aims at an elaborate form of beauty which is unsuited to the strife of business, and the tumult of a public assembly. The language and style which are most impressive in the drawing-room, are utterly ineffective upon the platform. The fine tooling and delicate tracery of the cabinet artist are lost upon a building of colossal proportions. It is plain, therefore, that very different, even quite opposite, intellectual gifts are required to form a good writer and a good speaker. Abstraction of mind, seclusion from the din and tumult of

public assemblies, unwearied patience in gathering the materials of composition, and exquisite taste, that will be satisfied only with the utmost nicety and finish of style, are demanded by the writer; while quickness of thought, boundless self-confidence, tact in seizing upon the most available, though not the most satisfactory, arguments, and a certain intellectual coarseness that is not offended by a slip or a blunder. are necessary to the orator. Again, a writer may spend an hour in choosing a word, and a day in polishing a sentence; he may watch for a simile "as the idle boy watches for the lurking place of an adder;" but, as the author of Lacon has observed, eloquence, to produce its full effect, must start from the head of the orator, as Pallas from the brain of Jove, clad in full panoply. The fastidious writer may blot out words and substitute new ones by the hundred, and it is his own fault if the fact is known to his dearest friend; but if an orator chances to boggle once with his tongue, the detection is immediate, and the punishment certain. Great writers, too, having a reputation to support, often suffer as speakers from a self-defeating over-anxiety to do well: like Sheridan, who was said to have been all his life afraid of the author of "The School for Scandal," they are frightened at the shadow of their own reputation.

Among the youthful orator's helps, there is no doubt that *conversation* may be made one of the most serviceable. Of course, there is a material difference between public speaking and private; yet the fact that one is monologue, and the other dialogue, does not prevent the latter from being a material aid towards the acquisition of ease and self possession in public speech, especially in debate. Quickness of thought, skill in seizing upon the strong points of a subject, exactness of statement, adroitness in parry and thrust, facility of expression, and general mental activity, are all cultivated by conversation, and are at the same time the qualities

most needed in public discussion. Instead of talking to five or ten persons in a public address, you are talking to hundreds or thousands, but "the one exercise has helped the other, as singing in a parlour helps to sing in a choir, or as shooting with an air-gun, at ten paces, helps one to shoot straight with a rifle, at a hundred."

We cannot conclude this chapter without reminding the student of oratory that there is no calling in which faith in one's self, so necessary to all successful exertion, is more necessary than in that of the orator. After he has made all possible preparation for a public effort, he should, as far as possible, dismiss all anxiety about the result. If, instead of having this self-confidence, he distrusts his own powers, and becomes self-critical, acting continually as a spy upon himself, he will almost certainly be embarrassed and crippled in his speech, if he does not break down altogether. Suspicion here, as elsewhere. tends to beget the very evil that is deprecated. The mind is apt to avenge any distrust of its faithfulness. Time, practice, and patience only can give the perfect ease, coolness, and self-possession which are essential to perfect success,—that profound faith in one's abilities which acts as a charm upon all the powers of the mind,—as time only can bestow that practical instinct of skill which gives the intuitive law of success, and shows the only way to reach it. And here we may speak of a phenomenon noted by some speakers which is full of encouragement to tyros in oratory who are appalled by the Herculean labours and difficulties which "cast their shadows before" them, as they toil up the steeps of excellence. We allude to that law of the mind by which its muscles, like those of the body, become autonomic, a law unto themselves; by which, as an eloquent pulpit orator has said, "the intuition with which it works is a safer and surer guide than precepts, and better and surer

success is reached than the most laborious planning could have gained. Everybody who has read the physiological works of the day, is more or less familiar with what is called "unconscious cerebration," a state in which the brain works unconsciously,—solving problems or answering questions at night, while the man is sleeping, which baffled all his powers in the daytime. Phenomena like this occur in the experience of accomplished and trained speakers.

A writer in "Harper's Magazine" speaks of a preacher unsurpassed by any living one in extempore power, alike of language, thought, and tone, who affirms that, sometimes, in his best hours, he loses all conscious hold upon his mind and speech, and while perfectly sure that all is going on well in his attic, it seems to him that somebody else is talking up there; and he catches himself wondering who under the sun that fellow is who is driving on at such a rate. Examples of this unconscious action of the mind are seen in every calling. It is this instinct of skill, the result of years of practice, self-discipline, and observation, which enables the funambulist to travel without fear on a wire suspended over the dizzy chasm of Niagara; which enables the marksman to raise his rifle, and, apparently without aim, to bring down a pigeon on the wing; which enables the painter to give the most delicate touches to his picture while engaged in conversation; which gives to the pianist his almost miraculous touch, so that as his fingers run swiftly over the keys, they seem to be instinct with thought and feeling oozing from their tips. This automatic action, it is evident, must be a great help to the orator, relieving him, as it does, of much care, anxiety, and toil, and carrying him oftentimes triumphantly through his work without solicitude or conscious effort. Like all other advantages, however, it has its compensations; and if a

speaker be naturally indolent, there is danger lest, instead of laboriously preparing himself, he should rely upon this faculty altogether. The result of so doing will be, as seen in the melancholy case of those persons who are distinguished for the "gift of the gab," that he will speedily lose all true inspiration and force, and sink into a mere machine, like a barrel-organ, that plays over and over *ad nauseam* the same worn-out tones.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TESTS OF ELOQUENCE.

It has been justly said that for the triumphs of eloquence, —for the loftiest displays of the art,—there must be something more than an eloquent man; there must be a reinforcing of man from events, so as to give the double force of reason and destiny. For the explosions and eruptions, "there must be some crisis in affairs; there must be accumulations of heat somewhere, beds of ignited anthracite at the centre. And in cases where profound conviction has been wrought, the eloquent man is he who is no beautiful speaker, but who is inwardly drunk with a certain belief. It agitates and tears him, and perhaps almost bereaves him of the power of articulation. Then it rushes from him in short, abrupt screams, in torrents of meaning." Hence Goethe has somewhere said that to write is an abuse of words; that the impression of a solitary reading replaces but sadly the vivid energy of spoken language; that it is by his *personality* that man acts upon man, while such impressions are at once the strongest and the purest. The immeasurable superiority of oratory spoken over oratory read, is known to all. When the contending forces are drawn out face to face, there is the excitement of a battle, and every blow which tells against the enemy is welcomed with the same huzzas that soldiers raise when a well-aimed shot makes a chasm in the ranks of the enemy, or demolishes his defences. The effect, under such circumstances, of an overwhelming attack or of a scathing retort arises as much from the mental condition of the hearers as from the vigour of the blows. "It is because the powder lights upon a heated surface that an explosion is produced." Again, the electric sympathy of numbers deepens the impression, even when no exciting question is up, and no party feeling is

kindled. An audience is not a mere aggregate of the individuals that compose it. Their common sympathy intensifies the feeling which the speaker produces, as a jar in a battery is charged with the whole electricity of the battery. The speech which would be listened to calmly by ten or a dozen persons, will thrill and electrify a multitude, as a jest will set the tables in a roar, which, heard by one man, will scarcely provoke a smile. Another secret of the superiority of spoken oratory, is the delight which is felt in impromptu eloquence as a mere feat. The difficulty of pouring forth extempore beautiful or striking thought in apt and vivid language, especially for an hour or hours, is so great that only few can overcome it, and the multitude, who see something divine in such mysterious manifestations of power, are ready to exclaim, as in the days of Herod, "It is the voice of a god!" The readers of a debate are under no such spell. The words do not come to them burning from the lips of the speaker, but impress them precisely as would the same quantity of printed matter coolly written for the press. They read passages which are reported to have drawn forth "thunders of applause" without emotion, and sarcasms which provoked "loud laughter" without being cheated into a single smile. Besides this, the figure, the voice, the magnetism of the speaker, do much to deepen the force and significance of his words. It is said that Erskine's looks spoke before his lips, and that his tones charmed even those who were too remote to catch his words. Demosthenes relied so much on action that he called it the first, second, and third requisite of an orator. Cicero declared that without it the greatest gifts are unavailing, while with it mediocrity can surpass genius itself. The power of the orator lies less in *what* he says than in *how* he says it. A provincial actor will deliver the "farewell" speech of Othello word by word with literal correctness, and you will be as unmoved as himself; the great actor speaks it,

and you "read Shakspeare as by a flash of lightning." It is said that Macready never produced a greater effect than by the words, "Who said that?" Garrick used to say that he would give a hundred guineas if he could say "*Oh!*" as Whitefield did. When Mirabeau's friend complained that the Assembly would not listen to him, that fiery leader asked for his speech, and the next day roused the Assembly by uttering as his own words they had refused to hear from another. "The words were the same: the fire that made them thrilling and electric were not his friend's, but his own."

There is another cause of the different impression which a speech produces when read from what it produced when heard; it lies in the very nature of the oratorical style. It has been justly said that that is good rhetoric for the hustings which is bad for a book. Fox, when told that a speech read well, said: "Then it must have been a bad speech." It is not to secure the "all hail, hereafter" that the orator aims, but at instant effect. The more exquisite his skill,—the more perfect his adaptation to his theme, his audience, and the occasion,— the more completely his speech is evolved *ex visceribus causae*,—the less likely will he be to captivate the general reader, especially when the lapse of time has worked a revolution in tastes, or obscured his allusions, or robbed the topics themselves of their interest. On the other hand, the more his discourse is adapted to excite universal interest, and to appeal to the sympathies of after ages,—the more it abounds in thoughts and suggestions of universal interest, and gems of expression which are likely to sparkle for all time,—the less exact will be the adaptation to the audience and the occasion. It was the very qualities in Demosthenes' speeches of which the modern reader is apt to complain, that made them so overwhelming in their effect upon his countrymen; and conversely, it was the very characteristics of Burke's philo-

sophic harangues over which his hearers yawned, that will make them the delight of all posterity.

The orator who is haranguing a promiscuous assembly must not proceed as if he were speaking in the schools. His oratory must be governed, indeed, by an enlarged philosophy, but he must not formally philosophise. The structure of his argument should be reared on broad and massy foundations, but in appearance it should be self-poised and pensile. While he should reason logically, he should make no parade of logic; the skeleton of his argument should not force itself through the flesh. Except on rare occasions, when addressing a highly intellectual audience, he must repeat the same ideas in different words,—dwelling upon and reiterating his thoughts, till he is sure that he is understood and has made a deep impression. There is a sort of previous lubrication, such as the boa-constrictor applies to the goat or bullock he digests, which is absolutely necessary to familiarise the popular mind with any truth, especially with one that is a startling or complex novelty. It becomes necessary, therefore, as a late writer says, to vary the modes of presenting it; putting it now directly before the eye, now obliquely; now in abstract form, now in the concrete; and he is the most skilful orator who can contrive the most cunning forms of appearing to say something new, when he is really but echoing himself,—who can break up massy chords into running variations, and mask, by slight differences in the manner, a virtual identity in the substance.

It was well said by Demosthenes that the power of oratory is as much in the ear as in the tongue. Fox advised Romilly, in an important trial, not to be afraid, in summing up the evidence, of repeating material observations, as "it was better that some of the audience should observe it, than that any should not understand." Erskine deemed it one of Fox's highest merits that he passed and repassed the same topics

"in the most unforeseen and fascinating review." He knew, adds Lord Stanhope, that, by the multitude, one argument stated in five different forms, is, in general, held equal to five different arguments. Both Pitt and Brougham justify the practice of amplification, the latter declaring that the orator often feels that he could add strength to his composition by compression, but his hearers would then be unable to keep pace with him, and he is compelled to sacrifice conciseness to clearness. De Quincey, in his observations upon Greek literature, remarks that even an orator like Lord Bacon (as described by Ben Jonson) was too weighty, too massy with the bullion of original thought, ever to have realised the idea of a great popular orator,—one who "wields at will a fierce democracy," and ploughs up the great deeps of public sentiment or party strife, or national animosities, like a levanter or a monsoon. "If such an orator," says De Quincey, "had laboured with no other defect, had he the gift of *tautology?* Could he say the same thing three times over in direct sequence? for, without this talent of iteration,—of repeating the same thought in diversified forms,—a man may utter good heads of an oration, but not an oration."

It is true the Greek orators appear to have adopted a different practice from the moderns in this respect; but there is strong reason to believe that their harangues have not come down to us as they were delivered,—that they condensed them when they committed them to writing. It was the opinion of Burke that not even an Athenian audience could have followed the orations of Demosthenes, if he had uttered them in the concentrated form in which they have come down to us; and Cicero objects to the Greeks that they sometimes carried brevity to the point of obscurity. But the expansion and repetition, which were a merit at the moment of delivery, become glaring defects when a speech is printed.

"Bottom! thou art translated!" it has been justly said, might be placed as a motto under most collections of printed speeches. Pinkney recognised this truth when he began to write out his great speech in the Nereide case, and, disappointed in the effect when he saw it on paper, threw down his pen. In reading the sermons of George Whitefield we are puzzled to account for the prodigious effects they produced; but we forget that the sentiments which, as seen on the quiet page, seem so tame and commonplace, were full of life, beauty, and power, when illustrated by his musical intonation, the play of his features, and his apt gestures. As printed sermons they are "stale, flat, and unprofitable;' but when rushing from the burning lips of the preacher, they wrought miracles, warmed the fastidious Hume and the haughty Bolingbroke into enthusiasm, and swept before them such towers of Sadduceeism as Franklin and Lord Chesterfield.

One of the most eloquent preachers of the day was the late Dr. Guthrie, of Edinburgh; yet the reader of his sermons hardly discovers in them adequate proofs of this fact. Much of his charm lay in his illustrations, which were apt and striking as they came from his lips, but lose much of their impressiveness on paper. In listening to his vivid appeals, a metaphor dazzled you and was gone; in his printed page, you examine it coolly and carefully; it is pinned down for you like a butterfly on a card, and you can critically finger it and pick holes in it. Hence, a reviewer of his published sermons, who would probably have been captivated by their delivery, complains that there is in them a great deal of illustration, and very little to illustrate; a very small army, but a most valorous noise of drums. The illustration, he says "bears the same relation to the idea illustrated that the lion depicted on the outside of the menagerie,—a man beneath his royal foot, a horse flying afar, as with uplifted head and

dishevelled mane he is engaged in sending forth his tremendous roar, which makes every creature of the wilderness quake with fear,—bears to the ignoble and sleepy brute, which, when you enter, you find huddled down in a corner of his cage, no more like the king of beasts outside, which is supposed to be his counterfeit presentment, 'than I to Hercules.'" So with many political speeches whose reported effects seem so incredible; when they are printed, we have, it is true, "the self-same words, but not the self-same tune." The vehement gesture, the thundering voice, the flashing eye, the curling lip, all "those brave sublunary things that made his raptures clear,"—above all, the sympathy and applause of his hearers, which doubled the weight and force of his utterances,—are wanting. In reading them at our leisure, pausing at every line, and reconsidering every argument, we forget that the hearers were hurried from point to point too rapidly to detect the fallacies by which they were cheated; that they had no time to disentangle sophisms, or to notice contradictions or inaccuracies of reasoning or expression. We forget that the sentence which seems so flat and unimpressive was made emphatic by the ringing pronunciation; that the sarcasm which seems so pointless took all its venom from the contemptuous smile that accompanied it; that the figure which seems so tawdry owed its vividness to the glance and the gesture; that the fallacy which looks so shallow derived its plausibility from the air of candour with which it was uttered.

Again, in reading a speech in cold blood in the closet, we make a use of it for which it was not designed. We seek instruction or amusement, while the orator never intended to instruct or amuse. He sought only to persuade. Wit, logic, philosophy,—every merit of thought or style which did not contribute to the end,—he sternly rejected. If repetition, exaggeration, sesquipedalian words, or bombast even, sub-

served his purpose, he employed it. As Selden says, "That rhetoric is best which is most seasonable and most catching." The blunt old English commander who addressed his men at Cadiz, was a true orator, if not a polished speaker: "What a shame will it be, you Englishmen, that feed upon good beef and beer, to let those rascally Spaniards beat you, that *eat nothing but oranges and lemons!*" O'Connell has been ridiculed for his blarney; but did not *he*, as well as his critics, know that he was talking nonsense when he harangued upon "hereditary bondsmen" and "the finest peasantry in Europe?" Yet, while pouring out that nonsense, he was one of the mightiest, because one of the most successful, orators that ever roused men to act. Nothing can be more tawdry than a large part of the speech of Sheridan on the trial of Warren Hastings; but we know that it was a great speech, not because Burke has told us so, but from the effects it produced. Windham, himself an orator, declared twenty years afterwards that it was the greatest speech within the memory of man; and the House of Commons confessed its power by adjourning on the ground that its members were too much excited to judge the case fairly. On the other hand, Sir James Mackintosh's "luminous and philosophical" disquisition on the Reform Bill we know was a failure,—and why? Because it was spoken to empty benches. And why was it spoken to empty benches? Because he spoke to the head, and not to the heart,—because he reasoned when he should have roused,—because, in fine, his talents were solid and substantial, not those which enable a speaker to produce with rapidity a series of striking but transitory impressions, and to excite the minds of five hundred men at midnight, without saying anything that any one of them will be able to remember in the morning.

Hazlitt complains in one of his essays that the most dashing orator he ever heard, was the flattest writer he ever

read. "In speaking, he was like a volcano vomiting out *lava;* in writing, he was like a volcano burnt out. Nothing but the dry cinders, the hard shell, remained. The tongues of flame with which, in haranguing a mixed assembly, he used to illuminate his subject, and almost scorched up the panting air, do not appear painted on the margin of his works." But ought this to have excited Hazlitt's surprise? Is it by profound learning and solid wisdom, by accuracy, depth, and comprehensive views, that men become masters of assemblies? A writer cannot be too profound, but a speaker may; and hence Archbishop Whately, in his "Rhetoric," seriously doubts whether a first-rate man can be a first-rate orator. The very habits of investigation, of accuracy, of thoroughness, of fastidiousness in the use of terms, which would qualify him for science and literary composition, would prove fatal to his harangue. Of the political orator, this is especially true. The larger his views, the more abundant his stores of knowledge, the more difficult will it often be to adapt himself to the nimble movements of that guerrilla warfare in which debaters chiefly shine. Though his troops may be far more numerous than those of another combatant, and more heavily armed, yet because he is too fastidious,—because he must pause to effect the best disposition of his battalions,—because his front and his rear must alike be cared for, before he will move,—he may be eclipsed by a person of far inferior powers, who yet can brilliantly manœuvre his more manageable forces on a more limited field. Superior activity and command of weapons may often compensate for inferiority in strength. The tactics of Napoleon, so irresistible in the field, are not less victorious in the senate. We are told that at an interview which took place after the battle of Austerlitz between Savary, his ambassador, and the Emperor of Russia, Alexander paid a just tribute to the marvellous genius of his conqueror, but contended that the French army was double his own,

"Your Majesty is misinformed," replied Savary; "our force was inferior to yours by at least twenty-five thousand men. But we manœuvred much; and the same division combated at many different points." So is it oftentimes in debate.

It is an old but just remark that eloquence is in the audience, not in the speaker. It is a harmony struck out of their mental chords by a master's hand. To play skilfully on this instrument he must be sincere. He must feel that he has gone to the *bottom* of his theme. But this is precisely what the deep thinker, trained to the most scrupulous accuracy of investigation,—who sees all the sides of a question, and is fully alive to its difficulties,—cannot do. *He* cannot be fluent upon it, for in *him* fluency would be flippancy. Especially will this be the case, if the subject be a new one which he has never considered, or if some new point has come up suddenly in the course of a debate. Though he may take a juster view of it, on the spur of the moment, than a shallow thinker would, he cannot fail to see and feel how impossible it must be to do full justice to a subject demanding reflection and investigation; and, therefore, however great his wisdom, he will be unable to speak with the fluency, the easy, unembarrassed confidence of another who never looks below the surface of things, and gets his best views at the first glance. Hence, as Hazlitt well remarks, "the distinction between eloquence and wisdom, between ingenuity and common sense. A man may be dexterous and able in explaining the grounds of his opinions, and yet may be a mere sophist, because he only sees one half of a subject. Another may feel the whole weight of a question, nothing relating to it may be lost upon him, and yet he may be able to give no account of the manner in which it affects him, or *to drag his reasons from their silent lurking-places*. This last will be a wise man, though neither a logician nor a rhetorician. Goldsmith was a fool to Dr. Johnson in argument—that is, in assigning the specific grounds of his

opinion; Dr. Johnson was a fool to Goldsmith in the fine tact, the airy, intuitive faculty with which he skimmed the surfaces of things, and unconsciously formed his opinions." And yet it is this fluent utterance, with graceful action and elegant diction,—qualities that speak to the ear, to the eye, and not simply to the mind,—that most popular assemblies want. An English reviewer justly says that true political science is not merely needless in popular assemblies, it is positively distasteful, and those who are masters of it can rarely obtain it a hearing. The gorgeous imagery and lofty eloquence of Burke could not atone for the repulsiveness of his legislative wisdom, and few men spoke to thinner benches. Lord Chesterfield tells us that he entered the House of Commons with awe, but soon discovered that, of the five hundred and sixty members, not over thirty could understand reason. These thirty required plain sense in harmonious periods; the rest were a mob who were to be moved only by an appeal to their passions, their seeming interests, and their senses. Graceful utterance and action pleased their eyes, elegant diction tickled their ears, but they could neither penetrate below the surface, nor follow those who did.

It may be thought that the House of Commons of to-day is a more intelligent body, and that, consequently, its requirements are higher. Not such is the judgment of some of the closest observers. "I find truisms," Mr. Milner Gibson once observed to a friend, "the best things for the House of Commons." "A learned man in that body," says Sir Henry L. Bulwer, who takes an extremely cynical view of the matter, "is more likely to be wrong than any other. He fancies himself amid an assembly of meditative and philosophic statesmen; he calls up all his deepest thoughts and most refined speculations; he is anxious to astonish by the profundity and extent of his views, the novelty and sublimity of his conceptions; as he commences, the listeners are convinced

he is a bore, and before he concludes, he is satisfied that they are blockheads. . . . The House of Commons consists of a mob of gentlemen, the greater part of whom are neither without talent nor information. But a mob of well-informed gentlemen is still a mob, requiring to be amused rather than instructed, and only touched by those reasons and expressions, which, clear to the dullest as to the quickest intellect, vibrate through an assembly as if it had but one ear and one mind." "It would be as idle," says Macaulay, "in an orator to waste meditation and long research on his speeches, as it would be in the manager of a theatre to adorn all the crowd of courtiers and ladies who cross over the stage in a procession with real pearls and diamonds." No man in his day had taken a more exact account of the same House than Sir Robert Peel; yet he tells us that arguments, to have weight with the representatives of the nation, must be "such as are adapted to people who know very little of the matter, care not much about it, half of whom have dined or are going to dine, and are forcibly struck only by that which they can instantly comprehend without much trouble."

As the object of public speaking in most cases is persuasion, it is natural to regard success as the highest test of skill. "A great speech," O'Connell used to say, in speaking of forensic discourses, "is a very fine thing; but, after all, the verdict is THE thing." There have been cases, no doubt, of triumph over adverse prejudices, where verdicts have been wrung from reluctant juries, or votes from hostile assemblies, under circumstances so unfavourable, that no higher proof could be afforded of the orator's ability and skill. Of all the testimonies to Cicero's oratorical power, the most convincing is the fact we have already mentioned, that he made Cæsar acquit the man he had resolved to condemn. It is said that the gay and gallant figure of Murat, when in the Russian campaign he rushed among the bristling lances of the enemy,

as if to grasp the bloody hand of Death, and lead him down the dance, drew from the Cossacks loud cries of admiration, So when O'Connell, against fearful odds, dashed into the opposing ranks in the House of Commons, even Peel and Disraeli sometimes dropped their pencils and gazed in fascinated admiration at the orator, with his wondrous attitudes, and still more wondrous words and tones. On the other hand, there have been cases where the divinest eloquence, enforcing unwelcome truths, has been powerless against deep-rooted convictions and foregone conclusions, especially when fortified by self-interest and party or sectarian prejudice. As in war, it is not always the general who puts forth the highest strategical and tactical skill that is rewarded with victory in a battle or a campaign, because, though his plans may be perfect, they may still be defeated by any one of a hundred contingencies over which he has no control, and which no human sagacity could have foreseen,—so an orator may be baffled by prejudices against which the most cogent argument and the most persuasive appeals may be directed in vain.

"A jest's prosperity," says Shakspeare, "lies in the ear of him that hears it," and the same may be said of the success of a speech. The history of legislation in this country and England shows that there are times of violent party strife, when the most convincing oratory can avail nothing against the inexorable decrees of party and "the dead eloquence of votes." The burning appeals of Chatham did not prevent Great Britain from taxing and waging war upon her colonies; the great speech of his son upon the Slave-Trade, the most powerful oratorical effort of his life, did not win a majority of votes in the House of Commons against that iniquitous traffic; the almost superhuman eloquence with which Burke, Sheridan, and Fox shook Westminster Hall did not prevent Warren Hastings from going "unwhipt of justice;" nor did

the Prince of Orators succeed, until after many impassioned and apparently fruitless appeals, in rousing his countrymen to a sense of their danger from Philip of Macedon. O'Connell never made a finer exhibition of his parliamentary powers than when, against fearful odds, and what he called "the beastly bellowings" of the House of Commons, he resisted the "Coercion Bill," introduced by Stanley. Erskine, in his advocacy of the people's rights before juries, was more successful than Curran; but in none of his addresses was he more eloquent than the brave Irishman, when, at midnight, in his defence of Bond, he rebuked the volunteers who clashed their arms as in defiance of his invectives, exclaiming, "You may assassinate me, but you shall not intimidate me;" nor in any of the fearful flashes of scorn with which Erskine scathed the band of informers, is there to be found a figure more striking than that of Curran, when he declaimed against the spies brought up after the rebellion from prisons, "those catacombs of living death, where the wretch that is buried a man lies till his heart has time to fester and dissolve, and is then dug up an informer." Champions of prisoners in the most remarkable state trials of their respective countries, they both, as Mr. Townsend has said,* struggled night after night, with all the resistless strength of eloquence; the one radiant of triumph and assured of victory, the other pale and steadfast in the energy of despair, certain of the result, but determined that all the decent rites of defence should be observed. In both cases, the populace, enthusiastic in their admiration, took the horses from their carriages, and by a voluntary degradation drew the orators to their homes.

It is an interesting question discussed by Archbishop Whately, why so few persons have won high reputation as orators compared with the number of those who have

* "Lives of the Lord Chancellors."

attained eminence in other pursuits. His conclusion is, that vanity,—the love of admiration,—which is so common in men of every calling, and which, though it may impede, does not prevent success, in poetry, politics, war, etc., operates as an absolute hindrance to oratory. The orator attains his ends the less he is regarded as an orator. A *general* reputation for eloquence may be advantageous; but on each *individual* occasion when he speaks, the more his hearers think of his eloquence, the less will they think of the strength of his cause. If he can make his hearers believe that he is not only a stranger to all unfair artifice, but even destitute of all persuasive skill whatever, he will persuade them the more effectually; and if there ever could be an absolutely perfect orator, *no one would (at the time, at least) discover that he was so.* Hence Shakspeare makes Mark Antony begin his famous speech over the dead body of Cæsar by declaring, "I am no orator, as Brutus is;" and hence the "Quarterly Review" finds fault with the celebrated scene, Jeanie's interview with Queen Caroline, in "The Heart of Mid-Lothian." The Queen, in reply to Jeanie's rhetorical speech, is represented as saying, "This *is* eloquence." Had it *been* eloquence, says the reviewer, it must necessarily have been unperceived by the Queen. "If there is any art of which *celare artem* is the basis, it is this. The instant it peeps out, it defeats its own object by diverting our attention from the subject to the speaker, and that with a suspicion of his sophistry equal to our admiration of his ingenuity. A man who, in answer to an earnest address to the feelings of his hearer, is told, 'You have spoken eloquently,' feels that he has failed. Effie, when she entreats Sharpitlaw to allow her to see her sister, *is* eloquent; and his answer accordingly betrays perfect unconsciousness that she has been so. 'You shall see your sister,' he began, 'if you'll tell me,'—then, interrupting himself, he added, in a more hurried tone, 'No, you

shall see your sister, whether you tell me or no.'" In listening to eloquence of the highest order, we are so occupied with the thoughts presented to us, and hurried so impetuously towards the end proposed, that we no more regard the medium by which we are affected, than a starving man the dish in which food is offered to him, or than the recipient of startling news regards the looks and dress of the messenger. Fénélon, in his "Dialogues of the Dead," represents Demosthenes as saying to Cicero, "Thou madest people say, 'How well he speaks!' but I made them say, 'Let us march against Philip!'" Jefferson tells us that when Patrick Henry was making his great speeches, he always swept his hearers along with him, and it was not till they had left the court-room or the legislative hall, that they found themselves asking, "What did he say?"

The same principle is illustrated by an anecdote told of Chief Justice Parsons, of Massachusetts. When he was practising at the bar, a farmer who had often heard him speak, was asked by a stranger what sort of a pleader he was. "Oh," he is a great lawyer," was the reply; "he is an excellent counsellor; but he is a very poor pleader." "But does he not win most of his causes?" "Yes; but that's because he knows the law, and can argue well; but he is *no orator*." An intelligent old gentleman in Massachusetts, a hard-headed bank president, who had served as foreman of a jury in a law case, was once asked his opinion of Rufus Choate. "Mr. Choate," said he, "was one of the counsel in the case, and, knowing his skill in making white appear black, and black white, I made up my mind at the outset that he should not fool *me*. He tried all his arts, but it was of no use; I just decided according to the law and evidence." "Of course, you gave your verdict against Mr. Choate's client." "Why, no; we gave a verdict for his client; but then we couldn't help it; *he had the law and the evidence on his side*." It had

never once occurred to the good man that he had been under a spell woven by one who was a master of his art. Mr. Parsons and Mr. Choate were both distinguished as verdict-getters. Unlike Parsons, many orators are tempted to sacrifice the substance to the shadow, by aiming at the admiration of their hearers, rather than at their conviction; while, on the other hand, some, like him, may have been really persuasive speakers, though they may not have ranked high in men's opinion, and may not have been known to possess that art of which they gave proof by skilful concealment of it.

One of the reasons why the very name of rhetoric has fallen into disrepute in this age, is that the greatest artists strive to conceal their perfection in it; they endeavour to make their statements in such a way that the effect may seem to be produced by that which is stated and not by the manner in which it is stated. It was said of Sir James Scarlett, who, though an admirable speaker, indulged in no great feats of oratory, that his triumphs at the bar were so easy and natural that they did not seem triumphs at all. The Duke of Wellington declared that when he addressed a jury, there were thirteen jurymen. A countryman who had been serving day after day on a jury which Mr. Scarlett had addressed, once paid him the highest compliment when he was undervaluing his qualifications. Being asked what he thought of the leading counsel,—"Well," was the reply, "that lawyer Brougham be a wonderful man; he can talk, he can; but I don't think nowt of Lawyer Scarlett." "Indeed!" exclaimed the querist, "you surprise me! Why, you have been giving him all the verdicts." "Oh, there's nothing in that," said the juror; "he be so lucky, you see, he be always on the right side." This reminds one of Partridge, in Fielding's "Tom Jones." "He the best player!" exclaimed Partridge after seeing Garrick in Hamlet; "why, I could act as well as he myself. I am sure if I had seen a ghost, I should have

looked in the same manner, and done just as he did. The King for my money; he speaks all his words distinctly, half as loud again as the others; anybody may see he is an actor."

It will be seen from all this, also, that eloquence is a relative term. It is, as Dr. Campbell has properly defined it, "the art by which a discourse is adapted to its end;" and therefore it is impossible to say of any discourse, abstractly considered, whether it is or is not eloquent, any more than we can pronounce upon the wholesomeness of a medicine without knowing for whom it is intended. While there are certain qualities which all discourses should have in common, yet there are others which must vary with the varying capacities, degrees of intelligence, tastes, and affections of those who are addressed. The style of oratory that is fitted to kindle the enthusiasm of Frenchmen, would often provoke only the merriment of Englishmen. The English are grave, matter-of-factish, sententious, and argumentative; the French ardent, discursive, and brilliant. The French speaker abounds in facial expression and gesticulation; the English stands almost motionless, clenching the desk with his hands, or burying them in his breeches pockets. Again, a speech addressed to an audience of scholars, exacts very different qualities from one addressed to the common people. It was said of one of John Foster's profound discourses when published, that "it should have been addressed to an audience created for the purpose." The orator who throws a congregation of illiterate enthusiasts into tears, would raise affections of a very different kind, should he attempt to proselyte an American Senate; and again, the finest speaker that ever swayed a parliamentary assembly, might try in vain to rouse or allay the passions of an uneducated mob.

Indeed, it is a well-known fact that some of the most persuasive parliamentary orators have failed when out of their proper element, floundering like a fish on dry land. If we

may believe Disraeli (Lord Beaconsfield), the greatest member of Parliament that ever lived was Sir Robert Peel; "he played on the House of Commons as on an old fiddle;" and yet, according to the same authority, "he could not address a public meeting, or make an after-dinner speech, without being ill at ease, and generally saying something stilted or even a little ridiculous." Mr. Cobden says of Lord John Russell: "On the boards of the House of Commons, Johnny is one of the most subtle and dangerous of opponents; take him off those boards, and I care nothing for him." On the other hand, O'Connell was equally at home in the forum, at the hustings, or in the House of Commons. Before he entered Parliament he was pronounced a mere "mob orator," and it was predicted by his enemies that in that body he was sure to "find his level." In 1830 he was elected to the House of Commons, and in 1831 he was listened to as the foremost orator in that assembly. It was said of Murray (Lord Mansfield), "that he refined too much, and could wrangle too little for a popular assembly," and hence he succeeded better in the House of Lords than in the House of Commons. The true orator will always study the character of his audience, and whether he is copious and flowing, or concise and pointed, —whether he arms himself with the thunders and lightnings of eloquence, or speaks "with bated breath and whispering humbleness" in the mild tones of insinuation or persuasion,— he will at all times accommodate himself to his situation, and, if necessary, will, like Sylla, convert even the trees of the Academy into martial engines.

CHAPTER VIII.

A PLEA FOR ORATORICAL CULTURE.

In the preceding chapters of this work we have attempted to point out and illustrate the aim, power, and influence of the public speaker. To give to the noblest thoughts the noblest expression; to penetrate the souls of men, and make them feel as if they were new creatures, conscious of new powers and loftier purposes; to make truth and justice, wisdom and virtue, patriotism and religion, holier and more majestic things than men had ever dreamed them to be before; to delight as well as to convince; to charm, to win, to arouse, to calm, to warn, to enlighten, and to persuade,—this is the function of the orator. In concluding this work, let us ask whether in view of the prodigious influence of his art, its cultivation should be neglected, as it comparatively is, both by individuals and in our schools and colleges? We say "prodigious" influence, for, after every allowance has been made for the supposed diminution of that influence in modern times, we still believe that there is no other accomplishment for which there is so constant a demand in the church, in the senate, at the bar, in the lecture-room, at the hustings, and elsewhere, or which raises its possessor to power with equal rapidity. Some of the most fiery themes of eloquence may have passed away with the occasions of tyranny, outrage, and oppression that created them; but though the age of "Philippics" has happily gone, yet so long as wickedness and misery, injustice and wretchedness, prevail on the earth,—so long as the Millennium is still distant, and Utopia a dream,—the voice of the orator will still be invoked to warn, to denounce, to terrify, and to overwhelm. Hobbes defined a republic to be an aristocracy of orators, interrupted at times by the monarchy of a single orator; and assuredly in a country where the

grandest rewards and the proudest positions are the prizes open to successful eloquence, we may well wonder that so few strive for mastery in the race "where that immortal garland is to be won, not without dust and heat." How shall we account for this neglect? Is there any adequate reason why the art of persuasive speaking should be less thoroughly studied and understood, or less effectually practised now, than at any former period in our country's history? Is there any necessity that the fearful faults in attitude, tone, and gesture, exhibited in the oratory of the pulpit, the bar, and the platform, at the present day, should be perpetuated? Is it pardonable that in professions whose most effective and conspicuous function employs the voice as its instrument, there should be so little recognition of the importance of improving that instrument, and of rendering it as capable as possible of producing its legitimate effects? Is it necessary that the majority of pulpit speakers should read the hymns, as they do, without feeling, grace, or appreciation, as the clerk of a legislative assembly might properly read a bill, or as a lawyer's clerk might read an inventory of a bankrupt's assets? Is it desirable that when they deliver their sermons, they should cling to the velvet cushion with both hands, keep their eyes glued to the written page, and speak of the ecstasies of joy and fear with a voice and face which indicate neither? Is it desirable that "every semi-delirious sectary who pours forth his animated nonsense with the genuine voice and look of passion, should gesticulate away the congregation of the most profound and learned divine" who has had a liberal education, "and in two Sundays preach him bare to the very sexton?" Why "call in the aid of paralysis to piety? Is sin to be taken from men, as Eve was from Adam, by casting them into a deep slumber?"

That the cultivation of oratory is thus neglected at the present day, needs, we think, no proof. More than forty

years ago a writer in the "North American Review" bewailed this neglect in the following words: "Anything," says he, "like settled, concentrated, patient effort for improvement in oratory; anything like an effort running through the whole course of education, renewed with every day as the great object, and pursued into the discharge of professional duties, is scarcely known among us. The mass of our public speakers would as soon think of taking up some mechanical trade or subsidiary occupation of life as they would think of adopting Cicero's practice of daily declamations. We do not believe that, on an average, our ministers have spent ten weeks of preparation on this most important part of their professional duties." To-day, this neglect is even more marked. Not a day passes but we see hundreds of young men turned out of our colleges whose failure in public life is assured in advance, because they have acquired, and probably will acquire, no mastery of the arts of expression. Men with a tithe of their knowledge and a tithe of their culture outstrip them in the race of life, because, though they know less, they have been unwearied in their efforts to acquire the art of communicating what they know in a pleasing and attractive way. In many of our colleges not only is no provision made for the study of elocution, but the study is discouraged by the absorbing attention demanded by other studies. Skill in oratory is identified with intellectual shallowness. A leading New York journal stated a year or two ago, that it knew of a college, the speaking of whose students at one of its commencements ought to have been felt by its officers as a burning disgrace, whose trustees, nevertheless, rejected the application of a teacher of reputation and experience to be permitted to give *gratuitous* instruction in that branch of education,—for what reason, do you think, candid reader? Not because they questioned the competency of the teacher, but because they "*didn't believe in teaching elocution at all!*"

Even in those colleges where lessons in elocution are given, the instruction, in many instances, does not exceed, during the whole four years' course, six weeks of teaching,—a treatment of the art which, in view of its difficulty and value, is only a sham and a mockery.

In nearly all our theological seminaries the art of oratory is treated with similar neglect, not to say contempt. In the theological equipment of their pupils, no pains are spared. The newly-fledged graduate is well versed in church history, and knows all the shades of religious belief, ancient and modern. He can tell you who Novatus was, and who Novatian. He can tell you to a nicety the difference between Homoousians and Homoiusians, Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians, Monophysites and Monothelites, Jansenists and Molinists. He has explored all the transactions of the Councils of Nice, Chalcedon, Trent, and Dort; he can give you a minute history of all the controversies that have vexed the peace of the church, recite the sixteen articles of the Priscillian creed, and tell you whether *filioque* is properly in the creed of the Latin church, and what was the precise heresy of Eutyches. He can read Hebrew with tolerable facility, and can split hairs in metaphysical theology, if not with Hermaic subtilty, at least with skill enough to puzzle and baffle an ordinary caviller. But while he has crammed his head with knowledge, he has never once learned how to make an effectual use of his knowledge. While he has packed his brain with history and Hebrew and exegesis, he is either uneducated in the all-important art of communicating the results of his erudition in a fascinating, or, at least, unforbidding way, or he has been instructed to despise that art. He has acted like a man who spends years in gathering materials for the erection of a mighty edifice, yet never attempts to arrange them in an order which will secure beauty, strength, or convenience. There is no doubt that

many a sermon which has been written with burning tears in the study, has been struck, as if by magic, with the coldness of death in the pulpit. The preacher who was all alive a few hours before is transformed into a marble statue.

What is the cause of this neglect of elocution,—whether it is because, as has been charged, these seminaries "freeze the genial current of the soul," and generate a kind of fine, high-bred sanctified disdain of heartiness and enthusiasm, leading one to care more for what Quintilian calls an "accurate exility" than for force and fervour of style,—we do not pretend to decide. We are inclined, however, to believe that the secret of this neglect lies partly in an unwillingness to believe that oratory is an art, and that excellence in this, as in every other art, can be attained only by careful training, persistent painstaking, and the study of the best models, and partly in the illusion that because religion is the most important of human concerns, it needs for the enforcement of its claims few or no adventitious helps. Pious and worthy divines, as one of their number long ago declared, are too apt to imagine that men are what they ought to be; to suppose that the novelty and ornament, the charm of style and of elocution, which are necessary to enforce every temporal doctrine, are wholly superfluous in religious admonition. They are apt to think that the world at large consider religion as the most important of all concerns, merely because it is so; whereas the actual facts show that the very reverse is the case. "If a clergyman," says Sydney Smith, "were to read the gazette of a naval victory from the pulpit, he would be dazzled with the eager eyes of his audience,—they would sit through an earthquake to hear him. On the other hand, the cry of a child, the fall of a book, the most trifling occurrence, is sufficient to dissipate religious thought, and to introduce a more willing train of ideas; a sparrow fluttering about a

church is an antagonist which the most profound theologian in Europe is wholly unable to overcome."

Since, then, men are comparatively indifferent to the reception of religious truth,—since they are prone, too, to cavil when they have the shadow of an excuse,—what can be more important than that every obstacle to the preacher's success should be removed, and that the discourses which they are invited to hear should be adapted to win and keep their attention? When will our theological teachers learn, and act upon the conviction, that preaching is not philosophising, not setting forth dogmas with orthodox preciseness, nor exhibiting the results of profound learning in Greek or Hebrew particles or idioms,—needful as these may all be,—but the earnest, anxious, successful manifestation of truth by the living voice, the eye, and the gesture, all shedding forth their mysterious magnetism, and compelling sympathy and conviction by a profound and manifest sympathy with human miseries and needs? It is the fashion with some preachers who pride themselves on what they call their "solid sermons," but whose spiritual artillery, however, is more remarkable for bore than for calibre, to sneer at popular preachers, who have more eloquence than theological learning or metaphysical acumen; but it is certain that no man ever won the public ear without some genuine attraction; and it would be far better to search out and emulate this attractiveness than to despise it.

The main cause, however, of the neglect of attention to oratory, is the heresy,—which is as pestilent as any theological heresy,—that eloquence is a gift of Nature purely, and must be left to her direction. It is foolish, we are told, to think of making an orator. A speaker may be taught to articulate his words distinctly, and to gesticulate, if not gracefully, at least with propriety; he may be taught to master his subject thoroughly, and to accommodate his style

of speaking to his audience; and by continual practice he may overcome his natural timidity as well as his awkwardness, and acquire a habitual ease and self-possession. But when you have done all, you have not made an orator. Unless he have the God-given inspiration, the inborn genius, which predestines him to public speaking, he is as far from eloquence as any scholar in Raphael's studio, who has faithfully learned to draw, to mix his colours, and to lay them on the canvas, is from being a Raphael. In all this there is a large amount of truth, and (especially in the inference drawn from it) an equal amount of error. Of course, nobody supposes that a man can become an orator without a spark of oratorical genius. Mere scholasticism, which derives its brilliancy from the midnight oil, we readily admit, can never compete with the inspiration which springs, armed and ready, from a sudden occasion, like Pallas from the head of Jove. In all lofty eloquence there must be a great and earnest soul behind a great cause, appealing, with plausible, if not with profound and weighty reasons, to a sympathetic audience for immediate action. Without these essential pre-requisites, the incidents of modulation, gesture, rhythm, accent, pronunciation, and all the other adjuncts of declamation, are but sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. But though nature and circumstance may do much towards the production of eloquence, they cannot do all. If they can furnish the world with ready-made orators, why are not the orators forthcoming? How happens it that all the successful speakers, and just in the degree that they were successful, have been conspicuous for their intense study of their art?

If inspiration and spontaneity can achieve such miracles here, why not in the arts of music, sculpture, and painting? Why not trust to inspiration in architecture, also, and in landscape gardening? There are born gymnasts, too, we suppose, and born marksmen, chess-players, pedestrians, and

boatmen. Do all these persons trust to the inborn faculty, to spontaneous impulse, without apprenticeship or training? Are the careful diet, the early hours, the daily testing of vigour and skill, the total abstinence from hurtful drinks and food, the training of the eye, the ear, the hand, or whatever of these or other means are employed, to acquire skill and insure success,—are all these spontaneous actions? Does the man who pulls the stroke oar, or the man who disarms his opponent at fence, do it by spontaneity? Admit to the fullest extent, that eloquence in its fundamental qualities, its groundwork, is a natural gift, yet it by no means follows that the speaker can dispense with art and study. Though the great orator must, in a certain sense, be born such,—though men are *organised* to speak well, as truly as birds are organised to sing, dogs to bark, and beavers to build,—though to be eminently successful in oratory, one must have a special constitution of mind and body, by which he is called incessantly and almost irresistibly, by a mysterious and inexplicable attraction that sways his whole being, to reproduce his mental life in this way,—yet he must *learn* his craft as slowly and as laboriously as the painter, the sculptor, or the musician. "To conform to Nature, or rather to know when to conform," it has been truly said, "we should previously know what Nature is,—what it prescribes, and what it includes."

The truth is, those persons who talk so much about "born orators," and what they call "a natural and artless eloquence," are guilty of a transparent fallacy. Nature and art, so far from antagonising each other, are often the selfsame thing. True art,—art in the sense of an instrument of culture,—is drawn directly from all that can be learned of the perfect in man's nature, and is designed not to repress or extinguish, but to develop, train, and extend what he already possesses. Nearly every person who has what is called the "gift" of

oratory, finds that he has great defects associated with his native gift. He has a harsh or feeble voice, an indistinct articulation, a personal, provincial, or national twang, an awkward manner, a depraved taste; and instead of developing the divine faculty, he has been labouring to thwart and obstruct it. What is more *natural* than that he should endeavour to overcome these defects, or, if he cannot get rid of them altogether, at least to diminish them by vocal exercises, by studying the best models, and by listening to the advice of a judicious friend? But what is all this but a resort to *art*, or the deliberate application of means to an end?—yet, is it art that is in the slightest degree inconsistent with human nature? If so, then every civilised, every thoughtful and moral man, who represses his natural impulses to be indolent, improvident, rude, and selfish, is so far unnatural. It is evident, therefore, that in admitting to the fullest extent the necessity of a natural manner in speaking, we do not exclude culture. When we say of a gentleman that he has a natural manner in society, we do not mean that he demeans himself like a savage or an unlettered boor, but the very reverse. We mean that he has mingled in the best society, and caught its ease, quietness, grace, and self-possession, till he reproduces them instinctively, without a thought of his manner, in his own deportment and bearing. When landscape gardeners talk of a natural style, they do not mean woods full of underbrush and marshes, lands bristling with sharp rocks, briers, and thistles, any more than they mean grounds laid out in stiff, formal plats, with rectangular walks, exotic plants, and trees trimmed into the shape of peacocks' tails. They mean grounds skilfully diversified with gentle slopes, land and water, here a bit of native rock and there a clump of native oaks, with just enough of wildness and roughness to set off the beauty of the lawns, and the whole so artistically, but not artificially arranged, as to

be a copy of Nature in her happiest moods. So a truly "natural" oratory is one in which the speaker's natural powers are so trained as to produce their happiest effect. No effort is made to repress his native genius, nor is he moulded and twisted into any conventional forms. All the culture he receives is based on his natural gifts, and is directed simply to giving them the fullest play and development, and to pruning away every thought or peculiarity which may weaken their force.

But it is said that, somehow or other, *any* system of instruction is apt to do injury, by fettering and constraining the intellect, and substituting a stiff, mechanical movement for the ease, flexibility, and freedom of nature. If this objection be just, we see not why it is not equally valid against instruction in vocal and instrumental music. The drill of the true teacher will never reappear in the performance of the accomplished speaker, any more than the food he eats will show itself unchanged in his *physique*, but will be merged in the personality of the pupil. If the result of oratorical training has been to make a speaker stiff, unnatural, and mechanical, it is either because he has had a poor teacher, or has but half learned his lesson. The fault lies not in the art, but in the imperfect acquisition of it. As Pascal says to those who complain of the grief that is intermixed with the consolations of the Christian's life, especially at its beginning, that it is not the effect of the piety which has begun in him, but of the impiety which still remains, so we may say of the bad habits which survive the best courses of instruction. To charge these habits upon the very systems which expose and denounce them, is the height of paradox. The truth is, the tendency in young minds to some of the various forms of spurious and artificial eloquence is so deep-rooted that it resists the utmost effort to counteract it; and he who ascribes this false oratory to the instruction which has been

employed with but partial success to banish it, might with as much propriety say of some spot of land which had been but partially cultivated, and from which the weeds, so prodigally sown by Nature, had been imperfectly pulled up, "See, this comes of gardening and artificial culture!" Who can doubt that if the rules of any other art were learned as partially, and as feebly followed, the result would be equally unsatisfactory?

We admit that an over-minute system of technical rules,—especially if one is enslaved to them,—may, and almost necessarily will, have the effect which has been complained of. The great fault of such systems is that they attempt to establish mathematical rules for utterance, when they are as much out of place here as they would be in a treatise on dancing. It has been justly said that the shades of expression in language are often so delicate and indistinguishable, that intonation will inevitably vary according to the temperament of the speaker, his appreciation of the sense, and the intensity with which he enters into the spirit of what he utters. Some of the best elocutionists have differed with regard to the words on which the stress should fall in certain passages, and whether certain words should be uttered with the rising or the falling inflection; nor is it easy to decide between them. Some authorities insist that the gesture should precede the utterance of the words, others that it should accompany it. There are many cases for which no rules can provide, and even when the wit and ingenuity of man have done their best in devising a system of merely general principles, passion and emotion, when genuine and overpowering, will often laugh them to scorn. Nevertheless, there must be *some great general principles* of oratory, which should be studied and followed, for to question this would be to question whether men speak best by accident or design,—when they take no thought, and when they previously consider

what they are about to do. It has been contended, however, that any attempt to establish a practical system of elocutionary rules, is useless and absurd. Who, it is asked, would think of telling the pugilist that, in order to give a blow with due effect, he ought to know how the muscles depend for their powers of contraction and relaxation on the nerves, and how the nerves issue from the brain and the spinal marrow, with similar facts, requiring, perhaps, a lifetime of study for their comprehension? "When Edmund Kean thrilled the heart of a great audience with the tones of indescribable pathos which he imparted to the words

"'Othello's occupation's gone,'

it would have puzzled him to tell whether the sentence was 'a simple declarative' or an 'imperfect loose.' He knew as little of 'intensive slides,' 'bends,' 'sweeps,' and 'closes,' as a celebrated prize-fighter did of osteology. He studied the intonation which most touched his own heart; and he gave it, reckless of rules, or, rather, guided by that paramount rule which seeks the highest triumphs of art in elocution in the most genuine utterances of nature."*

If it be meant by this to intimate that Kean achieved his triumphs without toil, we have only to say that he himself has expressly contradicted the assertion. "People think," said he, "because my style is new and appears natural, that I don't study, and talk about the sudden impulse of genius. *There is no such thing as impulsive acting: all is studied beforehand.*" "Acting," says Talma, in the same spirit, "is a complete paradox. The skilful actor calculates his effects beforehand. He never improvises a burst of passion, or an explosion of grief. The agony which appears instantaneous, —the joy that seems to gush forth involuntarily,—the tone of the voice, the gesture, the look, which pass for sudden

* "The Standard Speaker," by Epes Sargent, p. 23.

inspiration,—have been rehearsed a hundred times. No believe me, we are *not* nature, but *art;* and in the excellence of our imitation lies the consummation of our skill." But our main reply to all these objections is that they are the stale commonplaces which *all* the enemies of systematic and accurate knowledge, and the eulogists of common sense and practical education, have been repeating since the dawn o science. They have been urged against all systems of logic of rhetoric, and of grammar, and they might be urged with equal propriety and force against every treatise on music architecture, agriculture, chess-playing, or any other ar whatever. Indeed, Macaulay mocks at books of logic and rhetoric, "filled with idle distinctions and definitions which every man who has learned them makes haste to forget Who ever reasoned better," he asks, "for having been taught the difference between a syllogism and an enthymeme! Who ever composed with greater spirit and elegance because he could define an oxymoron or an aposiopesis?"* To this we reply that nobody ever pretended that a person who masters a work on logic or rhetoric will reason better *at first* than if he had not studied it; but if any of the principles it unfolds stick in his memory, and he afterwards, consciously or unconsciously, shapes and corrects his conclusions, or fashions his style by them, can any one doubt that he reasons or writes better?

Every art, from reasoning down to riding and rowing,—from speaking to fencing and chess-playing,—is learned by ceaseless practice; and can any sane man doubt that its principles will be more quickly and thoroughly mastered and more faithfully applied in practice, if systematised, than if left to each man to discover for himself? Can any one doubt that a great speaker can give a novice in the art many

* "Trevelyan's Life," Vol. I., p. 360.

useful hints which may anticipate and abridge the costly lessons of experience, and save him both time and trouble? Is there any reason why the young speaker should be left to grope out his way by the lead-line only, when he may be provided with a chart and compass? A proper system of oratory or elocution is not a system of artificial rules, but simply *a digest of the methods adopted and practised by all the great orators who have ever lived.* As to the illustration drawn from the pugilist, who, it is said, does not find it necessary to study anatomy and physiology, and learn in what way the muscles of the arm operate, etc., we reply that the example is not in point. It would be in point if any advocate of elocutionary or oratorical studies had contended that the young speaker should study the anatomy of the complicated organs of speech, the formation and action of the muscles of the arm and face, and all the other organs used in expression or gesticulation; but such advice is yet to be given. That Kean "thrilled great audiences," while profoundly ignorant of "slides" and "bends," and all the other technology of elocution, is doubtless true; and so it is equally true that men have electified and ravished great audiences by their musical genius who knew nothing of counterpoint or thorough-bass, of "octaves" or "semibreves;" that men have navigated ships across the ocean without a knowledge of astronomy or logarithms; and that men have raised large crops though they have known nothing of the constitution of soils, and have never even looked into a treatise on agricultural chemistry.

It is doubtless true that, in some cases, men without special oratorical training have exhibited a might and majesty, a freedom and grace of eloquence, surpassing those of other men who have devoted years to the study of their art. So a Colburn or a Safford, without mathematical instruction, may solve problems over which trained students of inferior

natural gifts may rack their brains in vain. So the Shakspeares, Wattses, Arkwrights, and Franklins, who have never had a college education, can achieve greater results in their callings than the vast majority of college graduates, with all their years of painful study and discipline. When Mozart was asked how he set to work to compose a symphony, he replied: "If once you *think* how you are to do it, you will never write anything worth hearing; I write because I cannot help it." But there has been but one Mozart, and even he must have been at some time a profound student of his art. Certain it is that no general rules can be drawn from the anomalous success of a few prodigies of genius that are formed to overcoms all disadvantages. Even if we allow, what is not true, that the men whom Nature has endowed with this heaven-born genius are a rule unto themselves, and can do themselves full justice without instruction, the question still remains, how to improve to the utmost the talents of those who must be public speakers, yet have no pretensions to the inspiration of genius,—men on whom nobody dreams that the mantle of Cicero or Chatham has ever fallen.

We sometimes hear it said that but one rule can be given in oratory, namely, "Be natural." But this advice, though correct enough, is so vague as to be utterly useless. As well might a teacher of the piano tell his pupil "to be natural," and give him no directions as to fingering the keys, expecting that he will thus become a finished player; as well might one hope to rival Paganini on the violin, Stephenson as a machinist, or Blondin in rope-walking, by copying nature, without study,—as one expect, by following this vague and indefinite direction, to play with skill upon that grandest, most musical, and most expressive of all instruments, the human voice, which the Creator has fashioned by the union of an intellectual soul with the powers of speech. As the

pianist or violinist must tutor his fingers to pliancy, so as to execute easily and instantaneously all the movements necessary for the quick production of sounds,—as the singer must, by ceaseless, painful drudgery, learn to master all the movements of his throat,—so must the orator, by diligent labour, by vocal exercises multiplied without end, acquire a mastery over those contractions and expansions of the windpipe, and over all the other organs of speech which modify and inflect the voice in every degree and fraction of its scale. Then, and then only, will his voice be obedient to the least touch of his will; then will musical sounds, that charm men and hold them while they charm, flow spontaneously from his lips, the result, nevertheless, of the subtlest art,—"like the waters of our fountains, which, with great cost and magnificence, are carried from our rivers into our squares, yet appear to flow forth naturally." But, says one, "can *gesture* be taught or learned? Must I raise my hand at this point, and lower it at that, exactly according to rule? Would you make me a clockwork of mechanism?" As well might you ask: "Must I frame my sentences according to rule, and think of Lindley Murray, whenever I wish to speak?" Of course, all rules, to be good for anything, must be so familiarised as to operate spontaneously. No man knows how to play a piano, who stops to think which keys he must strike. It is only when his fingers glide from one key to another mechanically, automatically, with hardly a thought of anything but the ideas he wishes to express, that one has really mastered the art. The lunge that rids you of your adversary is the inspiration of the moment, never the remembered lesson of the fencing-master. Let the young speaker master thoroughly the rules of his art, and his perceptions will be quick and vigorous as his feelings warm with delivery, and nature will prompt with happy exactness. He will combine the force of apt words, the point of finished periods, the

melody of natural tones, and the charm of spontaneous gestures, with an air of fervid sincerity, which will render his oratory as captivating as it will be powerful and impressive.

"But," says an objector, "is there not a great deal of quackery in the elocutionary profession? Does not the eloquent Dr. Philip Brooks say in his late Yale Seminary lectures, "I believe in the true elocution teacher as I believe in the existence of Halley's comet, which comes into sight of this earth once in about seventy-six years?" We admit that there is as much sciolism and charlatanry,—as much pedagogism and pedantry,—in the teaching of oratory as in any other department of instruction. But, as in other matters, we do not confound the true with the false,—reject the genuine with the counterfeit,—why should we do so here? If sagacity, good sense, and judgment are required in choosing an attorney, a physician, or a teacher of other branches than elocution, is it a reproach to sound oratorical instruction that it cannot be had without some care, caution, and trouble in looking for it?

There are some public speakers who, because Nature has been niggard to them of her gifts, can never hope to reach a high standard of excellence. "There are those," says the eloquent Bethune, "whose attenuated length of limb and angularity of frame, no calisthenist could ever drill into grace; whose voices are too harsh and unpliant, or their musical sense too dull, ever to acquire a pleasing modulation; upon whose arid brain the dews of fancy never fall, the thoughts which grow in it being like certain esculents without bud, blossom, or leaf,—naked, knotty, gnarled, and unseemly. Yet even these, if they cannot be graceful, may become less awkward; if they cannot be musical in utterance, they need not screech or mumble; or, if they have no fancy, they may cease to be grotesque by absurd imitations of it." Let no

one, then, who has occasion to address his fellow-men, forego the study of oratory, because his gifts are small. While the highest oratorical genius is of rare occurrence,—as rare, as we have already said, as the epic or dramatic,—yet it is positively certain that there is no other faculty whatever, which admits of such indefinite growth and development, or which may be so improved by care and labour, as that of public speaking. When Sir Isaac Newton was asked how he had discovered the true system of the universe, he replied: "By continually thinking upon it." In like manner, attention to vocal culture,—practice in elocution under intelligent guidance, till the voice has been developed,—the frequent hearing of the best living speakers,—the living in an atmosphere of oratory,—above all, constant recitation in private with careful attention to the meaning and spirit of what one utters,—will develop and perfect an oratorical style in any one who has the gift of eloquence, even in a moderate degree; and for any other a thousand professors can do no more than teach the avoidance of positive faults.

But too many who have the gift are apt, because they do not succeed at once, to be despondent and disheartened. If they were learning to play upon a flute, a violin, or a piano, they would not dream of drawing out all its combinations of harmonious sounds without years of toil; yet they fancy that a far more complex, more difficult, and more expressive instrument, the human voice, may be played upon with a few months' study and practice. Coming to it mere tyros, with the profoundest ignorance of its mechanism, they think to manage all its stops, and command the whole sweep of its vast and varied power; and finding that they cannot at once sound it "from its lowest note to the top of its compass," they heave a sigh of despair, and settle down in the conviction that they must be "Orator Mums." Men with real oratorical gifts are, perhaps, most likely to be thus dis-

couraged, because the same judgment and taste which are needed to work up into force or beauty thoughts and feelings imperfectly developed, must, when coupled with the characteristic sensitiveness of genius, induce frequent misgivings as to the degree of success one has achieved. Too many would-be orators are like the dwellers in Oriental lands of whom Sir Joshua Reynolds spoke in his address to the pupils of the Royal Academy. "The travellers in the East," he says, "tell us that when the ignorant inhabitants of those countries are asked concerning the ruins of stately edifices yet remaining among them, the melancholy monuments of their former grandeur and long-lost science, they always answer, 'They were built by magicians.' The untaught mind finds a vast gulf between its own powers and those works of complicated art, which it is utterly unable to fathom; and it supposes that such a void can be passed only by supernatural powers." What this great painter says of his art is true of oratory. As Pycroft has happily observed, in his comment on this passage, "those who know not the *cause* of anything extraordinary and beyond them, may well be astonished at the *effect;* and what the uncivilised ascribe to magic, others ascribe to genius: two mighty pretenders, who for the most part are safe from rivalry only because, by the terror of their name, they discourage in their own peculiar sphere that resolute and sanguine spirit of enterprise which is essential to success. But all magic is science in disguise; let us proceed to take off the mask,—to show that the mightiest objects of our wonder are mere men like ourselves; have attained their superiority by steps which we can follow; and that we can, at all events, walk in the same path, though there remains at last a space between us."

Lord Chesterfield went so far, in his letters to his son, as to tell him that any man of fair abilities might be an orator. The vulgar, he said, look upon a fine speaker as a super-

natural being, and endowed with some peculiar gift of heaven. He himself maintained that a good speaker is as much a mechanic as a good shoemaker, and that the two trades were equally to be learned by the same amount of application. This is an extreme view, and yet if by "orator" we mean not Cicero's magnificent myth, who unites in himself every possible accomplishment, but simply a pleasing and persuasive speaker, his lordship was much nearer the truth than those who are frightened from all attempts to speak by the bugbear of "want of genius." Chesterfield himself was an illustration, to some extent, of his own theory, for he declares that he succeeded in Parliament simply by resolving to succeed. He laboured indefatigably to perfect himself not only in public speaking, but in conversation, and Horace Walpole says that he was the first speaker of the House. If a schoolboy were required to name the most illustrious example of defects subdued and excellence won by unwearied perseverance, he would name Demosthenes. His discouragements would have appalled an ordinary man. Constitutionally feeble, so that he shrank from the vigorous physical training deemed so essential in a Greek education, he also, as we have seen, stammered in his youth,—the most unlucky infirmity that could befall a would-be orator. He passed two or three months continuously in a subterranean cell, shaving one side of his head that he might not be able to show himself in public, to the interruption of his rhetorical exercises. At last he overcame his defect, so that he was able to articulate the stubborn guttural most plainly. Still, having the most critical and fastidious assembly in the world to speak before, he was hissed from the bema in his early efforts, and retired to his house with covered head and in great distress, yet not disheartened. At one time he was returning to his home in deep dejection, when Satyrus, a great and popular actor, entered into conversation with him. Demosthenes complained

that though he was the most painstaking of all orators, and had nearly ruined his health by his intense application, yet he could find no favour with the people, and even drunken seamen and other illiterate persons were preferred to him. "True," replied the actor, "but I will provide you with a remedy, if you will repeat to me some speech in Euripides or Sophocles." Demosthenes complied, and then Satyrus recited the same speech in such a way that it was like a revelation to him. Aided by such hints, and urged on by his own marvellous industry, he by-and-by achieved a distinct success in the law courts, and at last became the most renowned of orators. In all this we see little that is suggestive of a heaven-born genius. No doubt Nature had planted in him the germs of oratory; but it was grown and matured only by the intensest labour and the most ceaseless care,—such labour and such care as would enable any man with fair natural abilities to "sway listening senates" and win verdicts from juries.

The great Roman orator subjected himself to a training as severe as that of the famous Greek. His life is before us in his works; and from them it appears that he directed all his energies to the cultivation of eloquence, the absorbing passion of his life. Placing himself under the instruction of Molo the Rhodian, he declaimed daily in the presence of some friend, sometimes in his native language, but oftener in Greek, a language with which he was perfectly familiar, and of which he transferred some of the rich luxuriance to his more unadorned and meagre native tongue. He was, apparently, master of logic, ethics, astronomy, and natural philosophy, besides being well versed in geometry, music, grammar, and, in short, every one of the fine arts. It was from no unassisted natural gifts, but from deep learning and the united confluence of the arts and sciences, that, as Tacitus affirms, the resistless torrent of that amazing eloquence derived its strength and rapidity.

If we read the biographies of the great modern orators we shall find their success to have been owing to similar causes. From Chatham downward, not one of them has become an adept in the art of persuading his fellow-men without a careful and persistent adaptation of means to the end. When Robert Walpole first spoke in the House of Commons, he paused for want of words, and could only stutter and stammer. "What future promise," it was asked, "was there in that sturdy, bull-necked, red-faced young member for Castle Rising, who looked like the son of a small farmer, and seemed by his gait as though he had been brought up to follow the plough?" It is not surprising that the brilliant and accomplished Henry St. John (Lord Bolingbroke), whose first speech on the same evening was loudly applauded, laughed at the idea of his old schoolfellow ever becoming his competitor. Yet in spite of this bad beginning, Walpole lived to falsify all these croakings, and to become by practice and painstaking a powerful debater. If ever a man was born with great oratorical powers, and could afford to dispense with all helps to success, it was Lord Chatham. Yet even he, the king of British orators, did not trust to the gifts of which Nature had been so prodigal, but, as we have already seen, laboured indefatigably to improve them by study and discipline. As a means of acquiring copiousness of diction and precision in the choice of words, he submitted to a most painful task. He went twice through a large folio dictionary, examining each word attentively, dwelling on its various shades of meaning and modes of construction, thus endeavouring to bring the whole range of our noble and affluent tongue completely under his control. His son, William Pitt, toiled still harder to perfect his natural gifts; and they were so sharpened by ceaseless practice that failure in his case would have been more wonderful than success. According to Lord Stanhope, when he was asked to what he principally ascribed

the two qualities for which his eloquence was conspicuous,—namely, the lucid order of his reasonings and the ready choice of his words, he answered that "he believed he owed the former to an early study of the Aristotelian logic, and the latter to his father's practice of making him every day, after reading over to himself some passage in the classics, translate it aloud and continuously into English prose." Not only did these rhetorical exercises receive a large share of his attention, but he was assiduous in his efforts to cultivate and improve his powers of elocution. By long practice he was able at last "to pour forth a long succession of round and stately periods without premeditation, without ever repeating a word, in a voice of silver clearness, and with a pronunciation so articulate that not a letter was slurred over." "Probably no man of genius since the days of Cicero," says Professor Goodrich, "has ever submitted to an equal amount of drudgery."

Of the silver-tongued Murray,—"the great Lord Mansfield," as he was called in his own time,—him whose words "dropped manna," who "spoke roses," it was said by Bishop Hurd, that though his powers of genius and invention were confessedly of the first size, yet "he almost owed less to them than to the diligent and studious cultivation of his judgment." Distinguished at school more for his excellence in declamation than in any of the other exercises, he, nevertheless, spared no pains to improve his natural gifts, and studied oratory with the utmost zeal and diligence. "Those who look upon him with admiration as the antagonist of Chatham," says Lord Campbell, "and who would rival his fame, should be undeceived if they suppose that oratorical skill is merely the gift of Nature, and should know by what laborious efforts it is acquired." He read everything that had been written upon the principles of oratory, and familiarised himself with all the great masters of ancient eloquence. He also diligently practised original composition, and spent

much time in translation. Cicero was his favourite writer, and he used to declare that there was not s single oration extant of this great forensic and senatorial orator which he had not translated into English, and, after an interval, according to the best of his ability, re-translated into Latin. To give him skill in extemporaneous speaking, he joined a debating society at Lincoln's Inn, where the most abstruse legal points were elaborately discussed. For these exercises he prepared himself beforehand so thoroughly and minutely, that his notes proved of great service to him afterwards, both at the bar and on the bench. Mastering in succession ethics, the Roman civil law, international law, the feudal law, and the English municipal law, he still found time, amid all these multifarious and severe studies, to attend to his oratorical exercises, and even, as Boswell expresses it, to "drink champagne with the wits," and cultivate elegant literature. Among his early acquaintances was Alexander Pope, who was struck with admiration by his rare accomplishments, and, above all, by the silvery tones of his voice, which was one of the most noticeable peculiarities of his subtle and insinuating eloquence. It is related that one day, a gay Templar having unceremoniously entered his room, young Murray was surprised in the act of practising oratory before a glass, while the poet sat by in the character of an instructor. Such were the toils of one of those "*born* orators," who are vulgarly supposed to be able to dispense with labour. Who does not see that it was by intense study and self-discipline that Mansfield acquired his masterly art of putting things,—that art which, as Lord Ashburton said, "made it exceedingly difficult to answer him when he was wrong, and impossible when he was right."

That Burke, with all his transcendent genius, was a prodigious worker, no other proof is required than his works themselves. "The immense labour which he bestowed upon

all he did," says an able writer, "was his constant boast. He disclaimed superior talent, and always appealed to his superior industry. . . . By incessant labour he could at last soar at any moment to his highest elevation, as though it had been his natural level. His innate genius was wonderful, but he improved it to the uttermost. By reading and observation he fed his rich imagination; to books he owed his vast and varied knowledge; from his extensive acquaintance with literature he derived his inexhaustible command of words; through his habits of incessant thought he was enabled to draw the inferences which have won for him the renown of being the most sagacious of politicians; and by the incessant practice of composition he learned to embody his conclusions in a style more grandly beautiful than has ever been reached by any other Englishman with either the tongue or the pen."

So great and so long-continued are the labours necessary to make an orator that it is probable there never was a successful speaker who did not acquire his mastery by the constant torment of his hearers. Charles James Fox acquired such skill and readiness in speaking, that he could begin at full speed, and roll on for hours without fatiguing himself or his audience. His mind was so richly supplied with knowledge, and so charged with intellectual heat, that it needed but collision with other minds to flash instantaneously into light. But even *his* talents had been gradually developed by practice. He made it a point to speak every night in Parliament, for his own improvement; and we are told by Lord Holland, his nephew, that in whatever employment or even diversion he was engaged,—whether dress, cards, theatricals, or dinner,—he would exercise his faculties with wonderful assiduity and attention till he had reached the degree of perfection he aimed at. Canning was almost equally laborious in his efforts to perfect himself in the oratorical art.

When he was about to make an important speech, his whol mind was absorbed in it for two or three days beforehanc "He spared no labour," we are told, "either in obtaining o in arranging his materials. He always drew up a pape (which he used in the House), with the heads, in their orde of the several topics on which he meant to touch, and thes heads were numbered, and the numbers *sometimes extended t four or five hundred.*" Minute points of accuracy and finisl which many other orators would have disdained to look afte received his sedulous and careful attention. The severity c Curran's oratorical training reminds one of that of the ol Greeks. Rarely has so great an advocate been made out c such unpromising materials. Small in stature, with n feature but a sparkling eye to redeem his mean appearance with a harsh voice, a hasty articulation, and an awkwar manner; known at school as "stuttering Jack Curran," an in a debating society to which he belonged as "Orator Mum, on account of a failure in his first speech; he resolved, neve theless, to overcome all these disadvantages: and overcom them he did so completely, that they almost passed out c men's recollections. To gain a stock of ideas, he spent hi morning "in reading even to exhaustion," and gave the re of the day to literary studies. A portion of his time wa given to the classics, of which he became passionately ena moured,—especially of Virgil. He carried a copy of th latter always in his pocket, and, during a storm at sea, hi biographer found him crying over the fate of the unhapp Dido, when every other person on board would have seen Did hung up at the yardarm with indifference. He made himse famiiiar with the whole range of English literature, and nc only learned to speak French like a native, but read ever eminent author in that language. While pursuing thes studies with indefatigable zeal, he was unremitting in hi efforts to perfect himself as a speaker. Constantly on th

watch against bad habits, he practised daily before a glass, reciting passages from the best English orators and authors. Speaking often in debating-clubs, in spite of the laughter which his early failure provoked, he at last surmounted every obstacle. "He turned his shrill and stumbling brogue into a flexible, sustained, and finely-modulated voice; his action became free and forcible; and he acquired perfect readiness in thinking on his legs,"—in a word, he became one of the most eloquent and powerful forensic advocates that the world has seen.

Erskine, Brougham, Grattan, Gladstone,—all the leading orators of Great Britain, whatever their genius,—laboured with equal diligence to perfect themselves in the art of speaking. The same industry,—as could easily be shown, had we space for examples,—has distinguished the most celebrated French orators. Count Montalembert, one of the most eloquent Frenchmen of the present century, when he was attending school at La-Roche, Guyon, in 1827, wrote thus to a friend, at the age of seventeen, concerning his oratorical exercises; "You would laugh heartily, my dear friend, if you could but see me in one of my rambles, whilst I follow one of my favourite pursuits,—declamation. By times, in the depths of the woods, I begin an extempore philippic against the Cabinet ministers; and all at once, thanks to my near-sightedness, I find myself face to face with some woodcutter or peasant girl, who stares at me in amazement, and probably looks upon me as a madman just escaped from a Bedlam. So, quite ashamed of myself, I take to my heels; and once more set to work at gesticulating and declaiming."

The orators of America are no exception to the rule touching the price of excellence. Not one of them, whose biography has been given to the public, has found the road to success "a primrose path of dalliance." We have many fifth-

rate speakers who, having boundless confidence in their native gifts, scorn the drudgery of a long apprenticeship to their art, and trust on each occasion, not to a careful preparation, but to "the inspiration of the hour," confident that they will find something to say on their themes, when they have "fairly warmed up to them." But no American orator whom the people flock to hear, relies on the inspiration of the occasion, unless it is strengthened and intensified by that surer, deeper, and more trustworthy inspiration which comes from years of self-culture and from conscientious preparation for each oratorical effort. The half-educated young lawyer or representative to the legislature may dream over the fancied possession of intuitive powers which he never displays; but those who have entered the arena and engaged in the contest, know that mental vigour can come only from discipline, and skill from persevering practice.

If there is one American orator more than another, who might be supposed to have derived his inspiration from his own "heaven-born genius" and the excitement of the hour, rather than from hard study, and who seemed able to embody fervid feelings in vivid and glowing language without the slightest effort, it was Henry Clay. But though endowed with the greatest natural gifts, he was no exception to the rule that *orator fit.* He attributed his success not to sudden illuminations while speaking, but mainly to the fact that he began at the age of twenty-seven, and for years continued the practice, of daily reading and speaking upon the contents of some historical or scientific book. "These off-hand efforts," he says, "were sometimes made in a cornfield, at others in the forest, and not unfrequently in some distant barn, with the horse and ox for my auditors. It is to this early practice in the great art of all arts, that I am indebted for the primary and leading impulses that stimulated me forward, and shaped and moulded my subsequent entire

destiny. Improve, then, young gentlemen, the superior advantages you here enjoy. Let not a day pass without exercising your powers of speech." We have already seen what efforts Pinkney and Wirt made to perfect their oratorical styles. The latter, with all his fluency and constant experience in debate, would never speak, if he could help it, without the most laborious preparation; and for extemporaneous after-dinner speeches, in particular, he had a mortal horror. He was a diligent student of literature as well as the law,—especially of Bacon, Boyle, Hooker, Locke, and the other fathers of English literature, among the moderns, and among the ancients, of Quintilian, Seneca, and Horace; and a pocket edition of the latter poet, well thumbed and marked, was his constant companion upon his journeys. "He was always," says one who knew him, "a man of labour; occasionally of most intense and unremitting labour. He was the most *improving* man, also, I ever knew; for I can truly say that I never heard him speak after any length of time, without being surprised and delighted at his improvement, both in manner and substance." In a letter to a young law-student, he gives this advice: "I would commit to memory and recite *à la mode de Garrick,* the finest parts of Shakspeare, to tune the voice by cultivating all the varieties of its melody, to give the muscles of the face all their motion and expression, and to acquire an habitual use and gracefulness of gesture and command of the stronger passions of the soul. I would recite my own compositions, and compose them for recitation; I would address my own recitations to trees and stones, and falling streams, if I could not get a living audience, and blush not even if I were caught at it."

Daniel Webster was a prodigy of physical and intellectual endowment; but his greatest gift was a prodigious capacity for hard work. Far from furnishing encouragement to those who trust to their inborn powers of oratory, he furnishes one

of the most striking of the thousand illustrations of the truth that the greatest genius, like the richest soil, yields its choicest fruits only to the most careful tillage. He told Senator Fessenden that the most admired figures and illustrations in his speeches, which were supposed to have been thrown off in the excitement of the moment, were, like the "hoarded repartees" and cut-and-dry impromptus of Sheridan, the result of previous study and meditation. On one occasion he told, with extraordinary effect, an anecdote which he had kept pigeon-holed in the cells of his brain for fourteen years, waiting for an opportunity to use it. The vivid and picturesque passage on the greatness and power of England,—than which neither Burke nor Chatham ever conceived anything more brilliant,—was conceived and wrought out years before it was delivered, while its author was standing in the citadel at Quebec, listening to the drum-beats that summoned the British soldiers to their posts. Mr. Webster once told his friend Peter Harvey that his great speech in reply to Hayne, which was generally supposed to have been delivered without preparation, had been substantially prepared long before, for another but not dissimilar occasion, so that when he was called upon suddenly to defend the honour of New England against the fiery Carolinian's attacks, he had only to turn to his "notes tucked away in a pigeon-hole," and refresh his memory with his former well-weighed arguments and glowing periods. As he himself said, he had only to reach out for a thunderbolt, and hurl it at him. "If Hayne had tried," he said, "to make a speech to fit my notes, he could not have hit it better. No man is inspired by the occasion; I never was." At another time, being questioned by a young clergyman about his speeches which were delivered upon the spur of the moment, Mr. Webster opened his large eyes, with apparent surprise, and exclaimed, "Young man, *there is no such thing as extemporaneous acquisition!*" "The

word 'acquisition,'" remarks Mr. Harvey, "was exceedingly well chosen. Mr. Webster knew that there was extemporaneous speaking every day. What he evidently intended to convey was, that knowledge could not be acquired without study; that it did not come by inspiration or by accident." Even in writing a brief letter, or note of presentation in a volume, he was fastidious in his choice of words and phrases, trying different forms of expression again and again before he could satisfy his severe and exacting taste.

Edward Everett, the most scholarly of all our public speakers, was unwearied in his efforts to improve his oratorical talents. Not only did he write out his speeches with the most fastidious care, but he took great pains to perfect his gestures and the mechanism of his voice. Persons who knew him well, say that even till he was sixty years old, you might have heard from his library, in the hush of evening, the low tones of familiar talk in which he was practising his utterances for the platform. Of course, it is possible, as that speaker did latterly, to carry this too far. We would counsel no person to waste his vitality in the study of petty effects, as Everett did when he pressed his handkerchief to his eyes so many hundred times at precisely the same point in his eulogy on Washington; or when he wrote to a friend and asked whether, if, in a certain passage in a lecture which he was about to give, he should put his finger into a tumbler of water, and allow the water to trickle off drop by drop, it would produce an effect on the audience. Tricks like these are too transparent, and are not to be confounded with the study of natural and appropriate gestures. Everett was the last of the artificial school of orators who practised them, and even he, with all his splendid rhetoric, lived to see the wane of his artificial power before the hard sense and sturdy realism of the nineteenth century.

In nine cases out of ten persons who object to elocutionary

studies and exercises, are thinking not of the legitimate results of such a training, but of extreme cases like that of this great rhetorician. It is not so much to elocutionary skill that they object, as to the artistic air which kills everything,—to a manner perfectly shaped by conscious skill and regulation. There are few who will not agree with them that if a speaker so trained gets to be absolutely faultless, that is about the greatest fault possible, and that, after such an exhibition, it is even refreshing, as Dr. Bushnell says, "to imagine the great 'babbler' at Athens jerking out his grand periods, and stammering his thunder in a way so uncouth as to become a little contemptible to himself." Far preferable to the over-finished and artificial oratory of Everett, who had mastered every art of elocution but that of concealing art was the more natural and spontaneous, though at times bizarre and eccentric, oratory of Rufus Choate. The most accomplished advocate of America, he was a splendid illustration of what laborious culture and systematic self-training can do. Never, for a moment, did he think of trusting to native genius or the inspiration of the occasion in his speaking. Forensic eloquence was the study of his life, and for forty years he let no day pass without an effort to perfect himself in the art of addressing his fellow-men. Far from sneering, as so many do, at the teachings of the elocutionist, he said to one of his students,—"*Elocutionary training I most highly approve of;* I would go to an elocutionist myself, if I could get time. . . . I have always, even before I first went to Congress, practised daily a sort of elocutionary culture, *combined with a culture of the emotional nature.*" In the symmetry of his training, and the incessant zeal with which he strove to develop, invigorate, and discipline every faculty of mind and body, he reminds us of the ancient Greeks. Of no man can it be more truly said that his genius was mainly "science in disguise."

Of all the living pulpit orators of America, Henry Ward Beecher is confessedly one of the most brilliant. The son of a great pulpit orator, endowed with the rarest and most versatile abilities, he, if any man could do so, might dispense, one would suppose, with a tedious and protracted training in the art of speaking. But what do we find to have been his education? Did he shun the professors of elocution, believing, as do so many of his brethren, that oratory, like Dogberry's reading and writing, comes by nature? No, he placed himself, when at college, under a skilful teacher, and for three years was drilled incessantly, he says, in posturing, gesture, and voice-culture. Luckily he had a teacher who had no faith in Procrustean systems, and never cared to put "Prof. Lovell, his × mark" on his pupils, but simply helped his pupils to discover and bring out what was in themselves. Later, at the theological seminary, Mr. Beecher continued his drill. There was a large grove between the seminary and his father's house, and it was the habit, he tells us, of his brother Charles and himself, with one or two others, to make the night, and even the day, hideous with their voices, as they passed backwards and forwards through the wood, exploding all the vowels from the bottom to the very top of their voices. And what was the result of all these exercises? Was it a stiff, cramped style of speaking, or was it *omnis effusus labor?* "The drill that I underwent," says this many-sided orator, "produced, not a rhetorical manner, but a flexible instrument, that accommodated itself readily to every kind of thought and every shape of feeling, and obeyed the inward will in the outward realisation of the results of rules and regulations."

How signally do the examples we have cited illustrate the truth of Sir Joshua Reynolds's remark that the effects of genius must have their causes, and that these may, for the most part, be analysed, digested, and copied, though some-

times they may be too subtle to be reduced to a written art! They prove conclusively, we think, that the great orators, of ancient and modern times, have trusted, not to native endowments, but to careful culture; that it was to the *infinitus labor et quotidiana meditatio*, of which Tacitus speaks, that they owed their triumphs; that, marvellous as were their gifts, they were less than the ignorant rated them; and that even the mightiest, the elect natures, that are supposed to be above all rules, condescended to methods by which the humblest may profit.

In answer to all this, some one may cite the "natural oratory" of Abraham Lincoln, who owed as little to books and teachers as perhaps any man of equal eminence. But even he did not win his successes without toil. His finest effort, the immortal Gettysburg speech,—which, brief as it is, will be read and remembered long after Edward Everett's ambitious oration, which occupied hours in the delivery, shall have been forgotten,—was prepared with extraordinary care. According to the statement of Mr. Noah Brooks, his friend, it was written and re-written many times. The same conscientious painstaking, even in the veriest trifles, distinguishes all the great actors and public readers who have won the ear of the public. It is said that a person once heard a man crying "murder," in the room under his own, in an hotel, for two hours in succession. Upon inquiry, he found that it was Macready, the tragedian, practising on a word, to get the right agonised tone. Mr. George B. Carpenter, of Chicago, who has had occasion to learn some of the secrets of Charlotte Cushman's mastery of her art, tells us that she never, in her public readings, read the pettiest anecdote, or even a few verses, without the most careful and laborious preparation. On one occasion, in Chicago, she prepared herself for an encore by selecting a comic negro anecdote that met her eye, which filled about twenty lines in a news-

paper. For three or four days she read and re-read this story in her private room, trying the effect of different styles of recitation, now emphasising this word, now that, now pitching her voice to one key and now to another, till she had discovered what seemed to be the best way to bring out its ludicrous features into the boldest relief. When Rachel was about to play in Paris a scene from "Louis de Lignerolle," she spent three hours in studying it, though it comprised but thirty lines. Every word was rehearsed in all possible ways, to discover its "truest and most penetrating utterance." So true is it that the greatest geniuses in every art invariably labour at that art far more than all others, because *their very genius shows them the necessity and value of such labour*, and thus helps them to persist in it! So true is it that whether in oratory, poetry, music, painting, or sculpture, no artist attains to that excellence in which effort concealed steals the charm of intuition, unless he is *totus in illo*,—unless, as Bulwer says, "all which is observed in ordinary life, as well as all which is observed in severer moments, contributes to the special faculties which the art itself has called into an energy so habitually pervading the whole intellectual constitution, that the mind is scarcely conscious of the work which it undergoes!" The prodigies of genius, so far from being favoured by Nature and allowed to dispense with toil, would probably, as Professor Channing, of Harvard, says, show to us, their short-sighted worshippers, were they able to reveal to us the mystery of their growth, a far more thorough course of education, a more strict, though perhaps unconscious obedience to principles, than even the most dependent of their brethren heve been subjected to.

We say, then, to the reader,—Would you wield the mighty power,—the thunderbolt,—of oratory? Listen to the words of Salvini, the great actor, to the pupils in his art: "Above all, study,—*study*,—STUDY. All the genius in the world will

not help you along with any art, unless you become a hard student. It has taken me *years* to master a single part." The same performer is now occupied with the *rôle* of King Lear, which he says it will take him two years to study thoroughly. To speak as Nature prompts,—to give utterance to one's thoughts and feelings in appropriate tones and with appropriate gestures,—*seems* too easy to require much labour. But, as it has been well observed, simple as truth is, it is almost always as difficult to attain as it is triumphant when acquired. It is said that one day a youth walked into the studio of Michael Angelo in his absence, and with a bit of chalk dashed a slight line on the wall. When the great master returned, he did not need to ask who had visited him; the little line, as true as a ray from heaven, was the unmistakable autograph of Raphael. Doubtless in every profession there are men who leap to the heights without much training; but we know not how much higher they might have risen, had they added all possible acquired ability to the gifts of Nature. "Where natural logic prevails not," says Sir Thomas Browne, "artificial too often faileth; but when industry builds upon nature, we may expect Pyramids."

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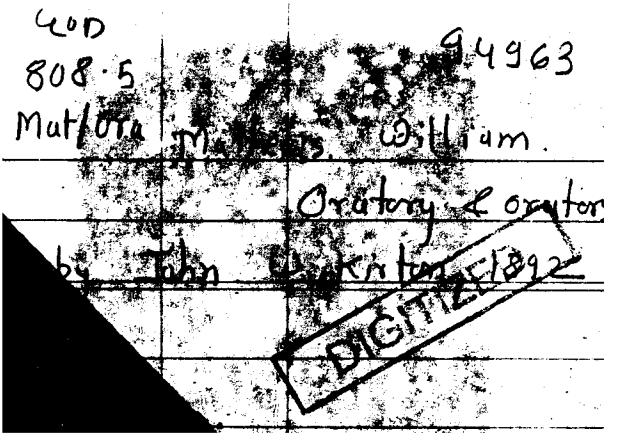
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